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BIANCA: THE STAR OF THE VALLEY.

A Romance of the Alps.

BY AUGUSTINE J. H. DUGANNE.

[CONTINUED.]

CHAPTER XII.

PADRE AMBROSIO'S VISITOR.



CREAT was the sensation awakened in Val d'Orazio, and indeed thro' all the valley districts, when the rumor of murder of the guide, Nicolo, and a traveller in his company, by the son of the reputed witch, Monna Barbara, became generally known. The old guide's long residence in this region, his many virtues and spotless character, had rendered him much beloved, and his sudden fate was deeply deplored by old and young. Of course, in proportion to the praise and regrets uttered regarding the dead, the maledictions pronounced upon the unhappy young man, who was charged with his assassination, were not few nor feeble. Indeed, before a day had elapsed after the arrest of Valentine, the swift tongues of evil report had coupled his name with all that could be imagined hostile to man and God. He was magnified into a demon by those who had never heard his name before, and even his youthful friends in the village, who had always professed friendship for him at the merry meetings and fairs, now scrupled not to talk of the "bad blood" which could not but be expected in the son of one so well known for her evil practices as the witch-woman, who gathered herbs at midnight, wherever, doubtless, to concoct poison for the whole valley.

Thus poor Monna Barbara's supernatural reputation began to receive new *edat*, and even her elder son, Berthold, though he had so well acted his part at the examination of Nicolo's body, came in for a share of the suspicions and abuse of the more ignorant peasantry, many of whom, indeed, remembered his strong arm and stout cudgel that had in former times been somewhat too familiar with the rabble assailants of his mother; but Berthold's demeanor on the arrest of his brother was so subdued and law-abiding, and his struggle between natural feeling and stern duty so apparent and meritorious in a young man, that the good padre and leading men of Val d'Orazio threw the sacred mantle of their official countenance over the vine-dresser, and he walked abroad without a stain.

In the meantime Valentine had been removed from the cottage of Nicolo, after being obliged to confront the cold body, and laying his hand upon its bosom to solemnly protest his innocence,—at which ceremony, on the present occasion, much to the astonishment of the gaping peasants, no new efflux of blood took place from the wounded side,—and conveyed, under strong guard, to the cellar of the priest's house, which being the oldest and strongest stone building in the hamlet, was chosen as a proper place of confinement for so dangerous a criminal. Here he was safely immured, still tightly bound with cords, after being adjured by the padre to turn his meditations to the author of heavenly mercy, as it was more than probable that the dispensers of justice in his case would not be likely to take earthly mercy into account. This was good advice, doubtless, on the part of the priest, but Valentine, in the state of mind which the consciousness of his own guiltlessness, joined with the cruel accusations against him, had thrown him, was little likely to profit by it. Nevertheless, volunteering such counsel, the padre deemed himself acquitted of his immediate duty; so, bestowing his benediction upon the two mountaineers who had been deputed as a guard over the criminal, outside the cellar, a worthy village priest proceeded to the more comfortable upper portion of his snug little parsonage.

The good pastor was a little man, with short, thick limbs and portly frontal proportions. His round head was set upon broad shoulders, and his face, amply clothed with firm flesh, rubicund

with health and good living, attested both the philosophy of its owner and the liberality of his parishioners. Altogether, Padre Ambrosio was a model village priest. He mounted with slow steps the few easy stairs that conducted to his "library,"—as he called it, though a very few books found place on shelf or table,—where a cheerful fire shimmered cozily on the polished hearth; and there, as he ensconced himself in a large cushioned chair, we will leave the worthy padre for a brief space, whilst we recount the incidents which had just awakened suspicion as to the guilt of our unhappy friend Valentine, in the cellar beneath.

It will be recollected that the lover of Bianca had parted from the young maiden in the early morning, with the intention of proceeding to the priest's house, to acquaint him with the sudden fate of his old parishioner; but on leaving Nicolo's cottage, the youth had just directed his steps towards his own home, where he found Berthold just arisen, and Monna Barbara engaged in preparing the morning repast. Almost the first rejoinder of the elder brother to the said intelligence brought by Valentine, was a rough denial of belief in its truth, and an intimation that the youth had dealt foolishly with the old guide. An altercation, in the angry style which Berthold's brutality generally provoked, followed immediately, in the height of which several villagers, passing the cottage, were attracted to overhear the quarrel. Their appearance only gave lower rein to Berthold's wicked temper, and redoubling his accusations, he called on Monna Barbara to bear witness to the threat which Valentine had uttered the night before in reply to Nicolo's slighting rebuke of the youth's pretensions to Bianca's favor. The unhappy mother was forced by the villagers to reply, and so deep an impression was made upon the minds of the latter that they resolved at once to detain the younger brother a prisoner for examination by the padre and magistrate. Valentine readily surrendered himself into the hands of two mountaineers, who volunteered to guard him till the padre could be sent for; and leaving these with their charge in the hut, the rest of the party repaired at once to the cottage of Nicolo. The scene which there took place is known to the reader, so by his leave we will return to the library in which we left the village priest.

For some minutes after depositing his portly figure in the arm-chair, the padre remained alone, until a knock at the door of the apartment interrupted what he reveries he might be disposed to indulge in. In answer to his summons to enter, the door was softly unlocked, presenting the figure of a good-looking little woman, who exercised in his bachelor establishment the triple vocation of cook, porter, and *cassiera*, or house-keeper.

"Well, Veronica, what is wanted with me?" "A strange lad at the gate is begging hard to see your reverence," replied the *cassiera*. "I bade him come when your reverence had dined, for the virgin knows, not a morsel has your reverence had since morning; but the youth was so pleading that—"

"Well, well, good Veronica, I suppose we must admit the lad." So said the priest, desirous of interrupting the housekeeper's garrulity. "But I thought no youth in the village was unknown to thee, Veronica!" "Your reverence speaks truth; but this lad is no villager,—nor has he a look like any that I know," uttered Veronica, with a puzzled expression upon her countenance.

"Well, we may soon know his errand,—therefore admit him at once."

The *cassiera* departed, and in a few seconds re-appeared in company with a graceful figure, whose light footstep scarcely sounded as they approached. His face was much shaded by a mountaineer's felt hat, which slouched upon a finely turned shoulder, half exposed, by the shifting of a cloak, in which the youth was wrapped, somewhat back from his compact frame, that was attired in a jerkin of embroidered velvet. The good padre half arose from his seat, and, with a dignified, yet easy, was his visitor's demeanor, as the housekeeper ushered him

into the apartment, and then at a glance from her master, respectfully retired, closing the door behind her.

"My son, what is thy errand with me?" For a moment after this question, the stranger remained standing in the middle of the room, as if undecided what reply to make to the mild interrogation of the priest. Then, apparently with a sudden impulse, he drew near and knelt at the padre's feet, saying at the same instant, in a voice of remarkable sweetness:

"Father, I have a secret to reveal."

"Wouldst thou be shaming, my son? If so, the confessional were more fitting place."

"Not that,—not now," returned the youth, hurriedly. "Tell me, holy sir, is there a young man in this village accused of a terrible crime of murder?"

"Truly, there is, my son. One who, till now, has been in good repute among his fellows; but the crafty are discovered at the last; and—"

"He is innocent,—this young man! He has committed no crime!" interrupted the visitor, in a quick rejoinder.

"What wouldst thou say, my son? No crime! How then didst say the worthy guide, Nicolo, that last night was full of life as myself?"

"And the stranger who trusted the unhappy youth—?"

"Father, they were not murdered,—it was the avalanche which overwhelmed them."

"Nay, my son, that is but the assertion of the accused, supported by no testimony. But the avalanche could not have dealt a murderous snuff at poor Nicolo's breast,—nor left the traveler's rich garments in the youth's hands,—nor miraculously spared him alone of all the three."

"Alas! I alas! father, if you would hear the truth!"

"Speak, then, my son! Gladly would I listen to aught that might cast a shadow of doubt upon the young man's guilt."

"O, I entreat you, believe me!" cried the strange youth. "Last night there were more human beings hurried to eternity than those you deem murdered. Last night, a band of outlawed men descended to the Huguenots' Altar, from the mountains, to rob the traveller of whom you speak. Following closely upon their destined victims, they shared his sudden fate—all were overwhelmed by the fearful avalanche!"

"What tale is this, my son?"

"But once escaped,—the leader of the outlawed men, who, snatched from death by the mercy of Heaven, beheld his companions swept to their awful doom. He, moreover, saw the traveller and the two guides buried likewise in the dreadful snows."

"Who is this man? Let him come hither." "Alas! he is outlawed—a robber!" cried the youth, sinking his head upon his breast. "He dare not enter a village lest the laws should claim him!"

"To what am I listening?" exclaimed the padre, hastily rising from his seat, leaving his suppliant kneeling upon the floor. "This is doubtless some idle story. What! is not the deadly wound sufficient? And did not the vine-dresser—did not his own brother first proclaim the youth's guilt?"

"Berthold?" asked the visitor, hurriedly.

"Ay, Berthold, brother to the accused!—the first to give information of the wretched young man's threats against Nicolo's life but a few hours previous to the deed."

"It is not so! No, no, it surely cannot be," cried the stranger, rising quickly to his feet. "Berthold could not act so wickedly—he would not do so foul a thing. Father! father!" he continued in great agitation, following the padre, who had moved across the room, "I pray you, condemn not the innocent! I swear to you, on my eternal soul, and as we shall both meet at the judgment seat, that what I have said is true, that the avalanche was alone the cause of death last night—the avalanche that spared but my father's life!"

"Thy father, my son! Who, then, art thou?" cried the priest, suddenly grasping the youth's hand, and drawing him nearer to himself. The action caused the slouched mountain hat, which the visitor had not removed since its entrance, to fall on one side, and the lad made a sudden movement to replace it over his forehead; but the padre said instantly, on remarking for the first time the rudeness: "Remove thy covering, youth. Is this meet respect for me?"

The youth made a hasty motion to obey, and lifted the hat from his head; but in doing so, he exposed beneath the thick curls which shaded his entire brow, a long braid of hair that had become disengaged, and now fell low upon his shoulders. Padre Ambrosio's placid face grew very dark.

"What mannerly is this?" he cried, sternly.

"O, forgive, forgive, holy father!" exclaimed the youth, sinking prostrate upon the floor, and permitting the fate looks that had concealed the braided hair beneath, to fall entirely off, disclosing

the beautiful face of Francesca, the brigand's daughter.

Padre Ambrosio started back a pace, and letting drop the maiden's hand, regarded her with a look of mingled surprise and alarm. Possibly, the good priest imagined for a moment that the evil one was assailing him in the guise of that dangerous temptation—a lovely woman. But it was only for an instant that he looked upon her in doubt, for as she lifted to his own a countenance full of deep grief, but with a holy purity in every lineament, while the pleading expression of her look attested the earnest truth which animated her heart, the worthy father felt a strong feeling of pity awakening in his breast mingled with a desire to penetrate the mystery of both her appearance and her errand. Long as he had exercised in that quiet valley the gentle duties of his pastor's office, and intimately as he was acquainted with the peasantry for many leagues around, he remembered not to have beheld any face resembling that now raised so devoutly to his own; and he judged at once that there was much in the young girl's situation that demanded the sympathy, perhaps the assistance, of one in his position. Nevertheless, the padre was not a man to lend too credulous an attention to appearances alone, and therefore a degree of caution was mixed with the tenderness of his reply to the passionate adjuration that had been uttered by the discovered female.

"I fear me, daughter," he said, in a low voice, "that the thoughtfulness of an earthly love has prompted thee to this imprudent step. Who, and what thou art, and why the interest thou showest in the fate of him who is accused of grievous crime, must be revealed to me, as to one who claims the right of knowing the sorrows of those who seek relief at his hands. If thou hast erred, daughter, but mock me not; if love for man has made thee forget the modesty of thy sex, and urged thee to attempt deception, put forth now, I charge thee, in a servant of God, and open thy heart to me, albeit it be false and sinful."

Thus adjuring her, the padre took both the hands of Francesca, within his own, and gazed with a benign look into her face. Tears gushed at once from the maiden's eyes, tears that relieved her overcharged feelings. She bowed her forehead upon the priest's hands as he resumed his seat in the arm-chair, and then commenced a recital of events and experiences in the past, such as she had never before poured forth to any living being. Broken by many sobs, but listened to with close attention by the padre, whose features, as the confession proceeded, exhibited a multitude of emotions, the story of Francesca, the brigand's child, from her infancy to the dread night just passed, went on till the early shadows of a winter's eve began to darken in the room, and the fire which had been brightly burning died out upon the hearth.

And when that strange relation was over, and Francesca's voice no longer audible, the good father, reverently raising his eyes to Heaven, murmured a short but earnest prayer, and then, after laying his hands solemnly upon the maiden's head, arose from his chair, and going to the door, called quickly to Veronica, bidding her hasten and bring to him his heavy cloak and staff. And in an hour afterwards, Padre Ambrosio and the strange youth had passed through the little hamlet of Val d'Orazio, and were venturing towards the lone some mule-path, leading to the osteria of Bacco and Brigita.

CHAPTER XIII.

REPENTANCE.

A WONDERFUL alteration had taken place in the looks and feelings of *Il capitano Tomaso*, whilome surnamed *Spaventevole*, or the "The Terrible." Whether the spectacle of his comrades hurled so swiftly and unready into eternity, and the subsequent night of suffering which he had passed, had been powerful to uproot the deep-grown evil of his past associations, or whether this sudden change was the result of years of potent effort on the part of his daughter, during which many gentle influences, persuasions and prayers had been apparently wasted by Francesca, but now seemed crowned with blessed success at the last; or whether, indeed, it was not both these causes combined which stirred the long-dormant better heart of the brigand, and laid it open to the powerful entrance of the "dove which beareth healing on its wings," need not be sought out by the reader; suffice it that the man was now broken in spirit, and imbued with the contriteness that presages true repentance.

The mental affliction of Tomaso had been severe, and its traces were strongly marked in his haggard cheeks and sunken eyes; but, nevertheless, the williness of look was no longer rife, and his mouth exhibited not the muscular tension that had before united its hard corners.

Beside his bed knelt the Padre Ambrosio, his hands clasped, while with closed eyes, he repeated fervently the prayers of the church. At a little distance, Francesca, likewise now kneeling, joining with her low-toned voice in the response of the priest which implored mercy upon sinful humanity. She had removed the disguise in which she had visited the priest's house, and now appeared in her own neat attire.

Tomaso's lips moved, but without sound, in concert with the padre's supplications. The brigand lay upon his back, his fingers joined over his breast, grasping firmly the ivory crucifix that had depended at the head of the couch. A smile of hope was bent in his features with the shadow of remorseful thought, as he recollected the ruined lifetime he had passed.

Thus the good padre knelt and prayed, and the repentant robber listened, and his daughter united her soul in deep devotion, when the door of the apartment was rudely opened, and another figure appeared upon the threshold. It was that of Bacco, the innkeeper, just awakened from a stupor in which he had been plunged during the entire day, the effect of enormous potations of strong wine that he had drunk on receiving intelligence of the sudden fate which had overtaken his sons. The osterino's usually sluggish face presented now a dark and threatening expression, as it protruded into the room, whilst, clinging with one hand to the door, he steadied his reeling frame, almost falling from intoxication—for though the brutal sensibility of the man had returned, he was still under the influence of the poison which had overpowered him. He had evidently been aroused to recollection but a short time since, and stimulated by some uncertain evil purpose, had staggered to the apartment of Tomaso, without knowledge of the padre's presence or the scene that was transpiring.

This apartment was one occupied, during many years, by the girl, Francesca, who there remained in retirement and comparative security, while her father, with his band, carried on their trade of rapine, making their dwelling in secret caverns for away in the fastnesses of the mountains. The osteria, seldom the resort of honest travellers,—inasmuch as the near neighborhood of Val d'Orazio obviated any necessity for such persons to stay their journey in so lonely a spot,—was used by the brigands of the valley, with whom Bacco and his family were leagued, as a place of rendezvous prior to or succeeding the marauding expeditions, whilst the different classes of emigrants who travelled the mule-path and its many intersecting delles, in pursuance of their vocation, looked upon the secluded tavern, to whose suspicious character they were no strangers, as a snug resting-place, at all times, and often a safe shelter for themselves and goods, during the violent tempests that sometimes continued for days to rage furiously in the rocky passes.

Francesca, protected by her father's influence and authority among his wild associates, had been accustomed to consider the inn of Bacco as her home, since much of her existence from childhood had been passed in the neighborhood, and of late years she had resided wholly within its walls, sometimes assisting the dame Brigita in her domestic efforts, sometimes occupying herself in embroidering her father's cloths, or adorning with the needle her own simple garb, but often absenting herself from the hotel, to wander in the most inaccessible portion of the hills, seeking some lonely cave, or silent nook, where for hours she might dream and sorrow, unseen by mortal eye. For one dark cloud hung evermore over the maiden's heart—the thought of her beloved father's lawless career, mingled with the memory of a solemn vow which, when yet a child, she had made to recover from an almost fatal sickness. This was to endeavor by every means to wean her outlawed parent from his wild habits of life, and direct his footsteps to the paths of peace and honor.

For years Francesca had devoted herself to the good work, but seldom with a promise of success—for Tomaso was growing daily older in life and crime, and habits had become with him indeed a second nature. Nevertheless, often as he contemplated or returned from his frequent expeditions, the maiden sought, by gentle words and tenderest entreaties, to turn his feelings in the direction of her own, to make him sensible of all that he ought to accomplish and enjoy in nobler pursuits, and to gain his promise of a change ere yet it should be too late.

But until now her efforts had been fruitless, opposed as they had ever been by the influence of old associations and her father's daily intercourse with the outlawed men who called him leader. With these wild beings, Francesca shrunk from intercourse, and they stood in too much awe of their superior, ever to attempt an undue familiarity. One person alone of those who visited the osteria, had the maiden ever

looked with a feeling akin to that which she bore her father—this person was the vine-dresser, Berthold.

Berthold had, a year previous to the time of which we write, encountered Francesca in one of her lonely wanderings, on an occasion when, seeking shelter from a snow storm, she had missed her way in a labyrinth of rocky defile far in the mountain's bosom. The young man, albeit his moody nature was seldom attracted by female beauty, could not but be struck with the grace and loveliness of the strange maiden, who, as he well knew, was no dweller in the neighboring Val d'Orazio. He conducted her safely to the ostia of the mule-path, where he had often before been a transient caller, in his mountain excursions; and it was not long before, after several succeeding visits, he began to awaken a tender interest in Francesca's breast, which he returned as strongly as his rude nature was capable of doing. Some months, however, elapsed before Berthold became aware of the relation in which the young girl stood to Tomaso, whose profession he very well knew; and when he did learn the fact, it was only to avail himself of it by soon instituting a close connection between himself and the brigand captain, in which, probably actuated by a share of the plunder—but, to do him justice, still more by his affection for Francesca—, the vine-dresser took upon himself the part of a decoy or spy, to give information to the robbers of each traveler as passing through the Alpine districts, might offer to these lawless men an opportunity of easy assault and pillage.

Strong as was the love which had begun to develop itself in the passionate nature of Francesca, it received a sudden shock when she became aware of the dishonorable office Berthold had accepted. Her first impulse was to banish him at once from her presence, even though her heart should break in the effort; but when the vine-dresser, with words of earnest devotion, declared to her that ought but his love for her inspired him, that he might gain his father's favor, and an opportunity for his frequent interviews, the woman's heart of his heretofore almost forgot his better instincts, and she half pardoned Berthold even while she condemned him. But, all subsequent incidents began slowly to disclose before the maiden's purer vision, much in the character of him she loved to fill her with the saddest forebodings. Violence, selfishness and malignity began at times to thrust their serpent heads out from the rosy garland with which her trusting fancy had crowned the forehead of her lover. The affection which she could not check became a pain to her, and she, who had reached a state of mind when she dreamed, whilst anxiously looking for, each interview with the vine-dresser, when that terrible event that ended forever her father's connection with his robber band, terminated likewise in Francesca, the struggle of her duty with her feelings.

Therefore, if since her return with Padre Ambrosio, the thought of Berthold mingled with her prayers, it was in supplication that the God who protected her would mercifully change the heart of him she had loved, and would give her meanwhile strength to bear the wreck of all her earthly hopes, and to devote herself henceforth to the saving of her father's soul. Therefore she implored of Divine Goodness a fortitude that would enable her to wrest for his sacred purpose, all earthly pleasures from her heart.

But while the maiden thus prayed, the fierce eyes of Bacco glared upon her from the threshold, and a hoarse oath broken from the inkeeper's lips, as his drunken senses became half aware of the unusual exercises that engrossed her attention.

"Ho! ho!" laughed the ruffian, savagely, staggering forward a pace. "Captain Tomaso, hold comrade, what dost thou with the priest? Pretty Francesca, where got ye this shaven-head for a lover?"

The brigand's daughter shrank fearfully from the inkeeper's brutal gaze encountering her startled look, and the captain himself half started from his pillow, a gleam of the old light darting from his eyes; but Padre Ambrosio, casting but a glance at the intruder, rebuked his eyes, and pressing his clasped hands against those of Tomaso, in gentle rebuke, continued in a louder tone than he had before used to pour forth his prayer for the repentant man. The solemn litany proceeded, the priest's voice filling the apartment, the maiden's low but distinct accents uttering the fervent responses.

It was a singular scene, as disclosed in the light of a single lamp which cast its faint rays upon the pale features of Tomaso, the quiet countenance of the priest, and Francesca's beautiful though agitated face. It was strange to hear those clear-toned voices arising, to behold the kneeling figures, the remorseful man of crime clasping his ivory crucifix, and to mark the rough form of the *oste* Bacco, his stolid lineaments lit with a dubious expression of mingled fierceness, fear and hesitation. Such a picture might have been sketched to inspire after ages with strange speculations as to its mysterious significance.

"What, ho! Tomaso!"

No answer returned the inkeeper's hoarse exclamation. The prayer still went on—the priest took no note of the interruption.

"I'll have no presiding in my house—dost hear me, girl?" cried the ruffian, with another oath; and reeling forward he grasped roughly the shoulder of Francesca.

Tomaso at this movement, which he was the first to behold, strove to raise himself, but was pressed back by the priest's hand.

"My son, compose thyself," whispered the unmoved padre, and then slowly turning his head, he fixed his gaze upon the inkeeper. Bacco seemed about to speak again; but the priest rising calmly, took from the captain's hand the crucifix, and lifted it suddenly above his head.

"Wretched man!" spoke the padre, in a tone of sternness, before which the drunken Bacco appeared to recall at once, "wouldst thou insult thy God?"

Saying this, he advanced towards the inkeeper, still elevating the sacred emblem on

which the awful scene of Christ's martyrdom was carved in the white ivory.

Bacco's sudden intellect, brutalized by intoxication, was no proof against the severe look and stern voice of Padre Ambrosio. At once all the terror of the church, which, brigand and sinner alike, he was yet, in contact with his countrymen, invested with awful powers, seemed arrayed against him. The words of the priest, as the latter lifted the cross, alarmed the superstition of his nature. He shrieked rather than cried out, at the same instant sinking on his knees, and trembling throughout his massive frame.

"Pardon! pardon! I pray for thy father!"

"Rather should I pronounce *anathema* upon thee, child of perdition!" returned the priest, perceiving the terror which his words had created; "rather should I curse thee, who comest hither to disturb the sacrament of God!—the confession of a repentant sinner. Hence I avow! ere the malediction of the church be hurled against thee!"

The padre fixed his unmoving gaze upon the wretched inkeeper, who quailed before its intensity, and groveling for a moment at the feet of his rebuker, turned away and dragged himself to the door and over the threshold.

"Remain thou there!" then said the priest, "await I implore pardon for thy crime!"

Bacco, now appearing to have recovered in a measure from his drunken insanity, obeyed the stern command like a child who dreads its parent's wrath. Padre Ambrosio then kneeling in the middle of the apartment, between the crouching inkeeper and Francesca, resumed his prayer to Heaven, mingling with his appeal in behalf of Tomaso, a supplication for the wretched man who had just been stricken like a weed to the earth—an evidence of the mysterious power and authority wielded by that church of which the village pastor was but the humblest instrument.

The prayer concluded, and absolution extended to the repentant Tomaso, Padre Ambrosio rose to depart from the ostia, not however before Bacco had humbly entreated him to offer prayers for the repose of his two sons, swept to a terrible fate by the last night's catastrophe. The priest, with a few words of solemn warning to the man himself, promised his intercessions, and then taking leave of Francesca, prepared for his homeward walk.

And as the good padre took his way from the lonely hostel, and ascended the mule-path towards the bridge leading to Val d'Orazio, he murmured to himself in a low voice:

"This innocent youth must not be sacrificed! It is all true which the maiden spoke, and the young man must be saved."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE TOWN BURGESS—THE FLIGHT.

THE Padre Ambrosio ascended with very cautious steps the abrupt crag in the mule-path which led from the chamois; and as he gained the top, encountered a man advancing from the village quarter. The features of this person were not distinguishable, as he walked somewhat in the shadow of the rocks, where the moonlight which now illumined the road did not fall; and the priest was about to pass him with a "benedicite," when the other, stopping short, pronounced his name.

"Ah! it is thou, Berthold! Thou art late in the mountains, my son; but I have good news for thee. Thy brother, and the lad Valene, are not guilty, as we deemed him."

The padre could not note the displaced expression that immediately darkened the vine-dresser's visage; but he marvelled that no exclamation of astonishment or joy followed his announcement.

"Dost hear, my son? Thy brother, I may in verity disclose, is innocent of the charge which, as rash men, not knowing Heaven's purposes, we have preferred against him."

"And how dost this good intelligence, come, reverend father?"

"Let it suffice thee, worthy Berthold, that it shall save thy poor brother's life. Come with me at once that we may speak to *il Borghigiano*. As lose no time, for in truth the day has been a weary one to me, and I long for the evening's rest."

The house of *il Borghigiano*, the burgess, was situated near the middle of the village, on the road leading to Padre Ambrosio's own residence. It was not long before they reached it, and the padre, leaving the vine-dresser, entered the house.

Il Borghigiano was enjoying his pipe, and an odoriferous atmosphere filled the room in which the visitors found him. The good priest at once opened his business by requesting the private care of the town burgess. Signore Leoni, as the magistrate was called, led the way at once to a small closet, opening from the apartment, and thither the padre followed him, leaving Berthold to await the result of their council.

The vine-dresser's countenance, during his short walk in company with the priest, could it have been seen by the latter, would have satisfied him that the declaration of Valentine's innocence was not quite so palatable to the elder brother as consanguinity might seem to demand.

The fallen form, habitual to him, deepened on the young man's brow, and his mouth, that best index of the human feelings, wore a vexed and alarmed expression.

Though Padre Ambrosio gave him no further information in reference to the cause of so sudden a recantation of belief in Valentine's guilt, he could not help suspecting from Francesca's words at midday regarding his brother, and from the fact of his encountering the priest upon the mule-path, that the daughter of Tomaso had been instrumental in changing the latter's convictions. The reflection was bitter to him, as it not only awoke a suspicion of a decrease in Francesca's affection for himself, but a fear lest the priest's scrutiny might bring to light his own nefarious connection with the late band of brigands. However, with characteristic caution, he had allowed naught to escape him that might reveal his secret reflections, and now awaited the padre's entrance with a countenance apparently undisturbed, for the youth was suspicious

that in a magistrate's dwelling there might be eyes observing his demeanor which his own glance did not discover.

The interview of Padre Ambrosio with his friend and parishioner, Signore Leoni, the burgess, did not last long; but apparently it was quite satisfactory to the priest, whose features, when the two appeared, wore a look as if a burden had been lifted from his mind. He nodded to Berthold encouragingly, and said:

"My son, the good Signore Leoni is pleased to signify that thy brother Valentine shall be set at liberty."

"Alas! I am a poor man," returned the vine-dresser, hesitatingly, "my poor brother is, doubtless, as you say, innocent of the crime imputed to him; but the villagers, I fear, are much excited against him, and will refuse to believe the truth."

"Let them refuse!" cried the burgess, warmly. "Shall an innocent young man be sacrificed to their injustice? Our reverend father, Ambrosio, has revealed enough to satisfy me that the deaths of last night were Heaven's will and direct act, and no agency of man; and therefore I say the youth Valentine shall go free!"

"But the peasants may seek his life if he is liberated!"

The magistrate regarded Berthold with a searching look, as if he suspected that some sinister motive lurked behind the brother's seeming solicitude. But good Padre Ambrosio appeared to consider the vine-dresser's suggestion as of some importance.

"It is very true," he said; "the village people, more especially old friends of Nicolò, are exceedingly wrath against the accused, and it will be difficult to satisfy them of his innocence, save by explaining more than we are at liberty to do. Therefore, Signore Leoni, we must devise some means of protection for the youth against private violence, else, indeed, it would be no mercy to set him free."

"If my poor brother might be sent away from the valley," suggested Berthold, "until such case as Nicolò's death is—"

"That may very well be done," rejoined the burgess, quickly. "Let it be even so, and charge thyself with the business. As brother of the youth, thou art the most interested, so be it thy care to conduct him from the prison whithersoever his safety shall require; and let this suffice for thy authority and protection hereafter, should thy acts be questioned!"

So saying, Signore Leoni hastily wrote on a scrap of paper, an order for the delivery of Valentine by the mountaineers in whose custody he had been placed, and then resuming his pipe, recommended the emission of spiral clouds of smoke. Padre Ambrosio, on his part, seized his heavy cloak about his shoulders, grasped his staff, and took leave of the magistrate, after thanking him warmly, and bestowing his customary blessing. Then, followed by Berthold, the priest set his face once more towards his snug home, where the anxious Veronica awaited him, carefully attending the bountiful supper, long since prepared in expectation of her master's coming.

On this good supper, for which, truly, his exertions had provided a fitting appetite, the padre's mind dwelt as he proceeded, while that of Berthold pondered only on the hatred which he bore his brother, and the surest means that he could adopt to render the flight of Valentine from Val d'Orazio one from which he would not soon return.

When Valentine, accused of the murder of one whose existence, as connected with the happiness of Bianca, had been dear to him as his own, found himself immured in the cellar-prison of Padre Ambrosio's house, with a feeling that in spite of his entire innocence of the charges against him, many circumstances conspired to render that of no trivial importance, he was disposed at first to arraign in bitter terms the justice of man and Heaven, and then, in the conviction of his own helplessness, to give way to a despairing apathy. But his reflections after a brief space assumed a more resigned character, and hope, which is ever bright in youthful bosoms, began to whisper that some happy event would change the appearances now so strongly against him, and return him to liberty and the respect of his fellow-men.

But as the long hours passed, and night came, shutting him in darkly, his meditations again became sombre and despondent. He began to dread that fate was about to involve him in one of those fearful webs of suspicion, which often defile all the efforts of innocence to escape their entangling folds, and that perchance a conspiracy, the cause or agency of which he knew nothing, would ultimately render futile all his expectations of rescue.

Such reflections tormented the unhappy youth's mind, as he threw himself at length upon a rude pallet in a corner of his dungeon, in the faint hope that sleep might come to him with its happy forgetfulness; but at this moment, the unclosing of doors aroused him, and the padre entered, accompanied by his brother Berthold. Valentine arose in astonishment at the priest's first words:

"My poor son, thy sufferings are ended! I have come to bid thee depart in peace!"

"Father, what do I hear? My innocence, then, is established! Heaven be thanked!"

"Follow thy worthy brother, my son. He will conduct thee to safety. But first, receive my blessing, and go on thy way in hope, for I will pray to Heaven that thy steps may be guided away from the paths of danger."

Padre Ambrosio, as he said this, extended his hands, and Valentine, kneeling in the obscurity of the cell, listened reverently to the benediction which the pastor pronounced in a fatherly tone.

"Now follow thy brother, Valentine, and may the Lord have thee in his holy keeping!"

The youth, bewildered at the suddenness of the event, could only murmur a word of gratitude, before Berthold had snatched his hand, and led him from the prison and the padre's house out into the road, leading down-

wards through the hamlet. Here, pausing, the vine-dresser addressed his brother:

"Valentine, there have been rash words between us heretofore. When last we parted, I believed you guilty of the death of Nicolò. Since then I am assured that my brother is innocent, and the one mother's gray hairs will not be dishonored. Valentine, we are here part; but let us part as brethren, with pardon on our lips for whatever evil we may have sought against each other!"

Berthold uttered this speech in a tone so subdued and apparently earnest, that his confiding brother was moved to tears. Clapping the hand which was extended to him, Valentine replied:

"Brother, if I have sometimes rashly angered you, may Heaven witness, I never harbored evil purpose; but why, Berthold, must we here part? Am I not free?"

"It is true you are free, but not to remain here, Valentine. *Il Borghigiano* has released you, at my earnest prayers, joined with the good padre's request—and because, likewise, there is doubt in their minds regarding the justice of the charge against you; but it is on the condition that you leave at once this valley that this boon is granted."

"What! and am I to fly from my accusers, and leave my memory blackened with false charges?" exclaimed Valentine.

"By flying you give time for your friends to prove your innocence, while, remaining here, you may be to-morrow sacrificed to the bigotry of the church, who hate our mother and ourselves," replied the vine-dresser.

"It is too true, Berthold—they hate us all," said Valentine, in a changed voice. "I will follow your counsel, and depart—perhaps forever!"

Berthold's countenance exhibited a gleam of pleasure at his brother's despondent words; but he concealed his satisfaction, and rejoined:

"Not forever, Valentine! This unhappy error of the villagers will soon, I trust, be corrected in some manner which we know not yet; so says the padre, at least."

"Did the good priest speak thus?" asked Valentine, quickly. "Well, I will away; but I must first bid adieu to my mother."

"Nay, Valentine, stay not even for that! Some loving peasant may observe us, and betray your escape at once. My counsel is, that you depart immediately from the valley, by one of the mule-paths passes. You have no time to lose, for safety lies not in Val d'Orazio."

"Perhaps you are right, brother," returned Valentine, sadly. "I will go, then, at once; but—"

"You would like to see Nicolò's niece," said Berthold, with something of his usual sneer. "You had better not, if you be wise enough to forget, and if you be not wise, you will still better not."

"What mean you, Berthold?"

"Only what all the village knows well—that Bianca was loudest in her demands for your punishment, believing you guilty of the murder of—"

"No, no! it is impossible! She cannot credit so monstrous a thing!"

"Have your own opinion, brother! Nevertheless, I tell you Bianca hates you, and couples your name with that of assassin!"

Berthold spoke in a calm tone, looking straight into his brother's face. Valentine remained silent a moment, his breast heaving with agitation, his countenance deathly pale. Then suddenly striking his forehead with his open hand, he grasped his brother's in the other, and cried in a choked voice:

"Farewell! God knows if it be forever! Pray our mother to remember me!"

"Farewell, Valentine. Trust me, we will have justice done—"

"I care not now for justice or mercy!" interrupted the unhappy youth. "Farewell, Berthold! I go—good night, my brother!"

The next moment, Valentine had broken from his brother's side, and was rapidly moving towards one of the clinging rocks toward the mule-path. Berthold remained where they had stood together, and watched the retreating youth till his form was lost in the shadows of the cliffs. Then, turning towards his hut, he muttered, as he proceeded:

"So much for the good lad's love-making. By San Giovanni! he will get many a league between himself and Val d'Orazio, ere many hours. It is just that turn I wished—for, in truth, it somewhat disturbed my conscience to have a hand in the boy's death—guilty or innocent. Now, thanks to my good fortune, he is away in such mood as will give a thousand chances to one that he knocks his addled brains out before the month is gone! At any rate, he will return no more, since he believes his sweetheart to have forsaken him. Ho! ho! the coast is quite clear for me now. Neither fox nor dog nor testy lover in the way. Bianca will soon, I wager, be quite as complaisant to the stout Berthold as to his sentimental brother."

Thus the vine-dresser communed with himself, disclosing one at least of the dark motives that actuated his conduct. It was evident that the event which had just transpired, though it had removed Valentine from danger, was yet not displeasing to the plotting Berthold, since it now appeared that the latter's desire had been not so much to wreak immediate injury upon his brother's person, as to inflict a deeper wound in his affections, and at the same time leave the way open for the accomplishment of his own ulterior schemes. Therefore there was a gleam of malevolent satisfaction in his eyes, when he returned to the hut, as fixing his regards upon Monna Barbara, who awaited him, he said, in a triumphant tone:

"We shall be no more troubled with your cab, Valentine, thanks to our good luck, mother!"

"What say you?" cried the old crane, starting up quickly from the dark nook, where she had been sitting. "Valentine! I have sought him everywhere! O, Berthold! do they still deem him guilty?"

"To be sure they do!" returned the vine-

dresser, sharply. "What has the fool done to clear himself? Think you the strapping's word is so good that it needs naught to purify it? Out, good mother! let the neck crack that can take no better care of itself!"

Berthold spoke these words in his usual vein of silliness, but evidently enjoying the pain which he inflicted upon the wretched mother. Monna Barbara replied not to his words, but hid her face in the dingy shawl that covered her shoulders, uttered a sobbing sound, as if choked with her feelings.

In truth, the old woman, since her return home, after witnessing the awful scene of the morning, in Nicolò's hut, had done little but rock herself to and fro, sighing and moaning in unextinguishable murmurs of grief. Berthold had cursed her several times, roughly ordering her to prepare his food, and she had mechanically obeyed the commands which she hardly comprehended; but when left alone in the hotel, on her son's departure, she seemed to take no heed of anything around her, but had continued her piteous lament till the night closed in, and hours of darkness passed ere the vine-dresser again made his appearance.

But when the last cruel remarks of her elder son reached her ears, Monna Barbara seemed entirely broken down, and so violent in a few moments became her agitation, that the hardened Berthold grew alarmed. He roughly seized his mother's arm, and exclaimed:

"Come, this is but baby-play, mother! The lad's safe enough—stop your whispering for him!"

But Monna Barbara's paroxysm only increased.

"Do you hear me, mother? I tell you Valentine has escaped—is free—is far away from the valley by this time."

These words produced a sudden effect upon the crane. She uncovered her face, and fixed her inflamed eyes upon Berthold, who had now lighted a brand on the fireplace, which cast its gleams around the hovel.

"What say you? Escaped! My Valentine escaped?"

"Your Valentine has escaped—that will satisfy you, good mother!" answered the sneering son. "Or, rather," he continued, with his customary duplicity, "if, his despaired brother, was fool enough to liberate him."

"You, Berthold!—you liberated Valentine?"

"Even so, my very dear mother—out of regard for your favorite son, I risked my own neck to obtain the Signore Leoni's favor for the innocent boy!" answered the vine-dresser, with a bitter accent. "Look you, if that be not something for a wretch's cub to have obtained for the benefit of another cub!"

Saying this, Berthold showed to Monna Barbara the order which the town burgess had written for the release of Valentine.

"And he is free—he is safe!"

"Safe enough if he make good use of his heels, and leave the mule-path behind him a few leagues by daybreak. The passes on the other side are now swarming with French brigades, under the new Corsican general, and doubtless your Valentine will find friends among some of the cut-throat bands. O, he's safe enough, I doubt not, since the devil takes care of his own; but give me some wine, mother, before I talk more, for my throat is as dry as a soldier's biscuit."

Monna Barbara studied to the cupboard, to produce therefrom the earthen bottle which contained the vine-dresser's drink, and then, anxious to learn more concerning the escape of Valentine, awaited patiently the moment when her coarse son should become somewhat more communicative—a result generally following indulgence in his cups.

But Berthold, on this occasion, replied only in monosyllables to his questions which his mother, after a little delay, ventured to ask him, and Monna Barbara was able only to glean from him the bare intelligence of the manner in which Valentine had been freed, and of his subsequent departure by way of the mule-path through the neighboring mountains; after which the vine-dresser, yielding to drowsiness, subsided into a state of repose, at least, if such could attest the fact, by a succession of snoring snore.

Monna Barbara watched her unnatural son, as he gave himself up to sleep, with a look in which various emotions were apparent. Then she resumed her old position upon the low stool, her elbows resting on her knees, her face covered with her thin fingers. Thus she remained for many minutes.

At last the crane began to exhibit a return of the emotions which had excited her so deeply on the previous night. Tears moistened her eyes, and seemed to soften her rugged spirit. She drew carefully from her bosom the cross of jet that she had found on the floor of the hut, where it had evidently been dropped by the stranger, whose sudden fall had involved her son in such imminent peril, and first pressing it to her lips, gazed at it for a length of time with evident emotion. Then her aged countenance became lit with a new expression, as if in sudden resolution. She arose, glanced a moment at the sleeping Berthold, and then proceeded, with as much secrecy as her feeble form would admit of, to wrap herself in a thick, short cloak, of the kind used by the female peasants, and to bind about her head with a scanty shawl one of the rude felt hats worn indiscriminately by both sexes. Then taking from her desk a pair of slippers, and a stout stock staff, Monna Barbara stood for a moment in the middle of the hut, as if in doubt of her purpose.

But her hesitation, if such it was, did not long continue. She gathered her coarse cloak tightly around her, grasped her staff with a firm hand, and then approaching the sleeping Berthold, lifted her eyes a moment, as if in mental supplication, then stooped feebly, and imprinted a kiss upon the vine-dresser's forehead—a kiss which, with a new expression, as if in sudden resolution, she gave it with the strong affection of a mother. The next moment Monna Barbara had disappeared from the hovel, and Berthold, still wrapped in stupor, remained its only inmate.

CHAPTER XV.

BIANCA.

Meant the valley people marvelled, many were the murmurs, and not a few the threats, on the second morning following Nicolò's death, when it was discovered that the youth, suspect of being its cause, had disappeared from the village, leaving no traces of his flight. More astonishment still was created by the magistrate, Signore Leon, openly declared that he had ordered the accused to be released; and the popular wonder was redoubled when, on the succeeding day, which was the Sabbath, Padre Ambrosio preached a funeral sermon over the old guide, in which he dwelt solemnly upon the event of the week, and asserted his knowledge of the young man's innocence, together with his conviction that to the avalanche alone was attributable the catastrophe. But when, in connection with this, the priest related the startling fact that Tomaso's robber-band had, by the same terrible agency, been annihilated, and that the bodies of a dozen brigands now lay wrapped in a wilting-sheet of snow, beneath the Haguenast Altar, there to remain until the spring floods should melt the deep drifts around them, the good villagers began to believe that a special revelation from divine intelligence had been vouchsafed to their pastor, and that, as devout Catholic Christians, they were bound to look upon the escape of Valentine as the result of direct heavenly interposition.

So the remains of Nicolò were quietly deposited in the little burial-place of Val d'Oraio, and the peasantry in a short time ceased to revert to his death, or to the flight of Valentine. Rumors and speculations concerning the latter, were indeed rife during a few weeks, but these gradually died away, and as the spring drew near, the valley inhabitants, preparing for the avocations which its coming rendered necessary, ceased to think of events that had broken in upon the quiet of the winter months. No intelligence of the youth's fate ever reached Val d'Oraio, and if any conjecture concerning it was hazarded, it was to the effect that Valentine, escaped as he deemed from fatal danger, had left himself with one of the brigand-bands infesting the northern declivities of the extensive ranges of mountains.

In Berthold, the vine-dresser, however, it was remarked that a notable alteration had been effected, when on account of the circumstances in which his brother had been involved, or from other causes. The young man, immediately after the funeral of Nicolò, appeared to change both in demeanor and character. He no longer seemed the morose and repellant being which the villagers had so long considered him. His looks became serious, without sullenness; he mingled often with the peasants, apparently seeking their good opinion; and he became, moreover, a constant attendant of mass at the little chapel in which Padre Ambrosio officiated. It was commented upon by many as a marvelous occurrence, that the vine-dresser should present so great an improvement; but the wonder of all was excited when, in a short time, not only was Berthold, but the old Monna Barbara, beheld on the Sabbath mornings winding their way, with sober looks, to listen to the priest and join in his simple worship. What occasioned the apparent regeneration of Berthold, and how far it was genuine, will appear in the sequel of events.

The spring-time began to advance through the more sheltered valleys, swift footed and laden with all good gifts. Flowers and fruitage came to adorn the hillside, and the Easter festival was at hand which, after the long season of fasts, enjoyed by the church, and more religiously observed in these districts than at the great capital of Rome, the youths and maids welcomed with glad anticipations.

Nicolò had now left his grandchild's destiny of the world's goods; for a life of frugality had enabled him to lay by a small store, designed at first for Bianca's marriage portion, but now (a sadder gift) become his funeral bequest. It was no great legacy, to be sure, but it sufficed for the maiden's ample wants, especially as, after the old guide's death, his sister Agata joined with her little means, and removing from the neighboring village, took up her abode in the cottage.

Beneath the protection of her aunt, Bianca kept herself retired from the little village world. In vain the brisk young hunters and peasants, with their gaily embroidered jackets thrown jauntily over their shoulders, came often before the cottage gate, to ask of aunt Agata how fared that worthy dame's health, and incidentally, of course—that of her lovely niece. In vain did many a bouquet of early blossoms, with more substantial gifts from mountaineer and villager, flit their way to good Agata's hands, reminding her of the time when she herself was young and beautiful. But Bianca appeared regardless of all, remaining secluded in her aunt's society, never seen by the admiring youths, save when, on the Sabbath or saints' days, she slowly passed from her dwelling to the little chapel of the hills, holding closely to Agata's arm, and lifting not her eyes from the ground, save when she returned the salutations of her oldest friends.

But, strange to say, among the latter, distinguished by a faint smile, or passing word, was one who certainly seemed the last person worthy of the maiden's notice—namely, the vine-dresser, Berthold, who seldom failed to be near the church door when Bianca approached, and was ever the first to offer her the holy water, as she passed modestly to her seat. Some persons inferred that he was the favored one among all the youths who came to her; but Bianca knew that she always greeted him with a smile when he presented himself, and that it was quite evident there was more between them than the world knew of. And, indeed, it appeared sufficiently mysterious that Bianca should regard the son of Monna Barbara with preference, considering the implacable of his brother in the events connected with old Nicolò's death. "But," said the gossips, "there is no accounting for a woman."

The true reason of Bianca's favor was not, however, fathomed by the gossips—which reason

was simply that the maiden believed Berthold to have loved her brother, and truly befriended him in assisting his escape. The vine-dresser had acquired her of the fact that he had liberated Valentine, on the very night when that event took place, and thereafter Bianca, cherishing as she did an unchangeable affection for her lover, began to entertain a feeling of gratitude to his brother, which manifested itself on the few occasions when they met. It was ever with a thought of the exiled Valentine, and perchance with the faint hope that the mightier intelligence of him, that she so quickly raised her glance when Berthold greeted her, and thus appeared to distinguish him from the rest of her admirers.

But Berthold—what thought he? We shall learn if we follow him from the church, after one of his brief interviews with Bianca, and accompany him to the place where we first encountered him—that is to the hut of Monna Barbara; but before doing this, it is necessary that we return for a space to the vine-dresser's much injured brother.

CHAPTER XVI.

AN ARMY IN THE ALPS.

"QUI VIVE!" was the sudden and sharp demand of a mounted soldier, at the entrance of a rough gorge, held his position as one of the long line of picket guards—the outposts of a French army, occupying all the passes of the Alps which sloped toward the fertile plains of Lombardy. This was the grand body of troops, in three divisions, destined to become widely known as "The Army of Italy," now under conduct of General Bonaparte, who had been despatched by the Directory of France to assume the chief command.

"Qui vive?" was thus demanded by the diminutive Gallic sentinel of a man who had just apparently presented himself within musket-range, apparently climbing from a narrow and precipitous footpath intersecting the main defile. The individual addressed responded by advancing a few paces, and holding out his hands to show that he was unarmed, save only with a common hunter's staff.

"Amico!"

"Advance with the word!"

The last order was not replied to so readily as the first, for the reason that it seemed unintelligible to the Italian hunter—for such he appeared to be—who now stood plainly revealed amid the broadish twilight that pervaded the mountain passes. Nevertheless, the new comer continued to advance, until the sentinel, apprehending treachery, brought his musket to a level, and was about to press the trigger—in which event no further parley would have been ours to chronicle,—but at this moment the measured tramp of men was heard in the gorge, and a squad of the relief guard suddenly approached on its round to place the sentinel watch. The sentinel, seeing himself in presence of an officer, recovered his arms for the salute, and then pointing to the intruding Italian, who had halted and was leaning upon his staff, said to the corporal:

"Whether you fellow means mischief, I know not; but he would have eaten a leaden supper in a trice, but for your coming. I was on the point of firing—"

"To silence the whole line, *petit Jacques*!" replied the corporal. "Better is it, comrade, to deal quietly with these fellows, or we shall have such a devil's nest at our backs as will make the return to France as difficult as our march thus far."

"Faith, the 'Little Corporal' has no intention of retreating by this route, *mon sieur*. Are we not to cross the Rhine, and bivouac in Vienna, and St. Genesio only knows what else, without a biscuit in knapsack, or a son in pocket!" returned the soldier, who, small as were his physical dimensions, was yet a big-stomached fellow, who already began to show symptoms of the *vine-grower*, or grumbler, a character which, in after times, the emperor made for himself a source of much amusement.

"Well, no more now, *petit Jacques*, fall in, and let us be moving. And thou, fellow," continued the corporal, turning to the hunter, who had been silently regarding the group, and addressing him in the Savoyard patois, which is generally well understood throughout the Alps, "What is thy business? Wouldst join the grand army? Mechanics a goodly vocation as you appear, must want excitement, and—"

"I desire no better than to cast my lot with such brave men," replied the hunter. "The French know how to take care of themselves without kings, like my own countrymen, the Swiss, and I hope the Italians will soon learn the lesson!"

"Bravo!" well said, my Swiss comrade; and as you are willing to join the grand army which is to give liberty to all nations, and make all of us rich as lords, be so good as to fall in at once, and we shall shortly be as firm friends, I doubt not, as if we had made the campaign together. March!"

So saying the corporal led the way along the gorge, and the "Little Jacques," as the sentinel was called who had been relieved, found himself, a moment afterwards, marching side by side with the hunter, at whose breast he had so lately pointed a deadly weapon. Such a different sequel was this to what would have been presented, had not the relief guard come at the nick of time to save the stranger's body from a musket ball.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

A TURKISH WIFE.

A testator left to his eldest son one half of his house, to his second son one third of his house, and to his third son one fourth of his house. The executor did not know what to do, as seventeen will neither divide by two, nor by three, nor by nine. A devisor came upon horseback, and the executor consulted him. The devisor said: "Take my horse and add him to the others." There were then eighteen horses. The executor then gave to the first son one half, nine to the second son one third, six to the third son one ninth, two; total seventeen. The devisor then said: "You don't want my horse now; I will take him back again."—*Eastern Scenes.*

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

HOME OF MY CHILDHOOD.

BY MARY M. DEARBORN.

I mark a quiet and lovely spot
Beneath the spreading elm,
Where pleasant visions from the soul,
From memory's sweetest realm,
The grass-green growth, that slopeth still
Before the open door,
Each bush and shrub that gently waves,
As in the days of yore,
The murmuring brook still gliding by,
The meadow, fresh and green,
That marked my oft-visited feet,
Within its narrow stream—
Make me again the prattling child,
Beside my father's hearth,
To mingle with the low beloved,
In scenes of household life.

To see a bright and happy band,
With footsteps quick to come,
Answer a mother's tender voice,
That bids me welcome home.But when a father's face is met,
I smile the changing years,
And all those lovely visions fly,
Like morning's misty dream,
Why mingle not that loving voice
With his, in tender tones,
Or why comes not those hasting feet,
In answer to my own?Those eager steps are slackened now,
That met my joyous call;
And vacant seats are found to-day,
Within those hallowed walls.For chains and shackles are fastened there,
Around our father's hearth—
And first, the darling of the flock
Is called away from earth.
Called to a brighter mansion, far,
Upon a sunnier shore,
Where darkened shadows never fall,
And sorrow comes no more.And next, that voice whose gentle tones
I miss sweetly on my ear,
Is mingling in the song of love,
That swells my joyous tears!"Weep not for me," that spirit cries;
I've done with toil and care,
And stand on the blissful shore
Of heaven's eternal joys!Then I will weep no more, nor fear
To stem life's swelling sea—
Since I'm no longer, toiling slave,
The pilgrim's way must be,
But hasten with undaunted step,
The path that I may tread,
Till I reach the shining host,
Who love beyond the dead!For all of earth is changing fast,
And hastening to its close;
And when the lengthened shadows
Shall mark our endow's end,
In life beyond the present life,
In clouds of golden light,
We'll praise our dear Redeemer,
And take our upward flight.

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

THE TEMPLAR'S BRIDE.

BY H. C. PARSONS.

In the northern part of England, on the confines of the county of Cumberland, there stood, at the time our tale opens, the preceptory of Warwick, a stronghold of the "most holy Knights of the Temple." The morning sun had just risen, shedding a flood of golden light upon its lofty towers, and its massive battlements, when a man wrapped in the white cloak of a knight stood before its walls. He appeared desirous to avoid observation, for, stealing in the shadow of its walls, he reached a place where the moat was narrow, and like an accustomed to the stratagem, by a powerful exertion of strength, he leaped across the shining water. A small door by the side of one of the highest towers was before him. He opened it with a key which he took from his bosom, and passed into the garden of the preceptory. With the same carefulness he stole through the garden, up a private staircase, through a long hall, and into his room. There he seemed to breathe more freely. Rapidly divesting himself of his garments he threw himself upon his couch. Not long was he destined to enjoy the sleep he appeared so much to desire. A knock upon the door startled him, but before he could speak it was opened, and the intruder walked into the room.

"Ah, Sir Edward, you have returned," said the new comer.

"Yes, Sir Hugo, and would that I had never gone forth."

"What! Can Rosa have proved false?"

"No," said the other, starting from his couch.

"No, Sir Hugo D'Aubrey, she is true to me now, but how will she feel towards me when she learns the truth?"

"What mean you?"

"Do you not see? I am a Templar; I have vowed before high Heaven to live a life of celibacy, and I have broken that vow."

"Listen, for you must know all. You know that for some months past I have wooed the lovely Rosa. I could not, I dared not wrong her. Yesterday I told her of my love; I represented myself to be, as I had before, a soldier of fortune, a count of France. I urged her to an immediate union, and she did not refuse. Last night, the old church near the village, we were married. No one was present, save her mother and the priest. Poor girl, poor girl, how I have wronged her! I wore the disguise I have always assumed when I visited her. But to-day she shall know all; I will reveal to her the dread secret, and then fly with her to some distant nation, where, forgetting and forgiving all, we may yet be happy."

"I fear that you have been too hasty."

"I know that the punishment is death if I am discovered. But there is no fear of that; you alone know my secret. Now I must hasten; I promised to meet Rosa early this morning, by the ruined fountain near the village. Farewell, Sir Hugo, for to-night I have England forever."

"Farewell, Sir Edward. I hope that I shall soon meet you, when you will be happy."

Sir Hugo left the room as he spoke. Scarcely had the door closed before a feeble smile ap-

peared upon his dark features, and his lips curled as he muttered:

"Leave England, Sir Edward! Never while I am a Templar. Ah, little do you know the love I have, and still do bear the Lady Rosa, or you would not yet dream of safety. But I have to prevent her departure!" He mused for a moment, as he walked the hall. At length he said, slowly, "There is no other way; he must be arrested and die," then walking rapidly along the hall he entered the room of the preceptor of the order.

When the morning duties were performed Sir Edward Westworth mounted on his red roan steed passed out of the portal, and over the drawbridge of the preceptory. He rode slowly for a moment until a small clump of trees hid him from the castle, then urging his horse to its greatest speed, he rode rapidly across the forest. For more than an hour he continued his headlong course, until he reached what appeared to be the ruins of a small but on the confines of the forest. Hastily dismounting he threw off the white cloak of a Templar, and drew from a concealed place among the old timbers, a rich green mantle which he put on over his armor. Again he mounted his horse, but this time he rode more slowly. In a few moments he stood on the top of a small hill. From its summit was visible a little village. He rode towards it, but just before reaching it, he turned aside, and plunged into a thicket which grew by the road-side. Then dismounting he fastened his horse, and wrapping his mantle across his breast, walked towards a ruined fountain. He seated himself by its side, and looked around. He seemed surprised to see no one near, after waiting a moment, with a look of alarm he sprang to his feet. A merry laugh then broke from a thicket hard by, and a beautiful girl, bursting from it, ran forward and threw her arms around Sir Edward's neck.

"False knight," said she, laughingly, "a false knight thou art, and doubly false I will regard thee, for hast thou not kept me an hour waiting?"

"Indeed, Rosa—"

"No excuse, sir. I see I must forgive you. But what is the matter?" said she, in a voice of alarm. "You look ill."

"Rosa," said the knight, disengaging himself from her embrace, and walking a few paces back, "Rosa, I have come this morning to reveal to you a secret which no longer must be concealed. You have trusted in me, depended on my honor; and how have I fulfilled that trust? Look, Rosa," he cried, tearing the mantle from his breast, and displaying upon his glittering armor the blood red cross. "Look, behold the Templar!"

With a look of agony she gazed a moment upon that symbol, and then fell senseless. He rushed forward and grasped her in his arms. Gently he lifted her, and bore her to the fountain. He laid her softly on the bank, and reached over to procure some water, when a rustling sound broke from the thicket, and six armed men, dressed in the dusky garments of the retainers of the Templars, rushed towards and seized him. Sir Edward struggled for a moment to free himself, but seeing that it was all in vain, he turned to the men, and haughtily demanded, "By whose authority they arrested a Knight Templar?"

"By the order of the most holy Preceptor of Warwick," said a voice in the thicket, and at the same moment a new actor appeared upon the scene.

"Who spoke then?" said Sir Edward, starting. "I surely recognized that voice. Who are you who thus dares to arrest me?"

"Sir Hugo D'Aubrey," said the person addressed, at the same time lifting his visor, "a true knight of our order, and not one who has forgotten his vows to God. Away with him, soldiers, to the preceptory."

"Stay one moment, if you are men. My wife, my wedded, lawful wife, lies there senseless. Sir Hugo, as you hope for salvation, let me see her but a moment."

"She needs not your assistance, she shall be well cared for. Away, men, I command you, begone!"

They dragged Sir Edward from the spot, while he struggled desperately for his liberty. They bound his hands behind his back, and placing him on a horse, they started for the castle.

Meanwhile Sir Hugo raised the still insensible girl in his arms, and gazed steadfastly upon her marble features.

"Humph," said he, "fair mistress, a bride but for a day, how frightened you will be when you awake. The fool who married you will soon be no more, and in a dungeon we shall see, if you will again scorn Sir Hugo D'Aubrey."

He bore her in his arms to his horse, gently placed her in the saddle before him, and followed the soldiers to the preceptory.

The great hall of the castle was arranged for a trial. The bright sunlight, streaming through the stained glass of the windows, glittered on burnished gold, and shining steel. At one end was seated in his chair of state the Preceptor of Warwick. Around the side stood the knights clothed in their white garments, and behind them stood the retainers dressed in the dusky costumes of novices. Sir Hugo D'Aubrey, with a smile of triumph upon his countenance, stood by the side of the preceptor, and the knight who was to act as a Knight Templar brought before the chief of his order to be tried for his life. But the preceptor had been urged to this course by the arguments and threats of Sir Hugo, and he had determined that Sir Edward should die.

He gave the signal, and heavily ironed the prisoner was brought before him. He was very pale, but firmly and undauntedly he stood before him, and, as he gazed full of scorn he answered the sneering smile of Sir Hugo. In the midst of a deep and profound silence the accusation was read. A low murmur ran through the hall as the witness for the prosecution was named. The friendship of the two had been known to all the knights, and all supposed that Sir Hugo was Sir Edward's fastest friend. The angry glance of the preceptor stilled the murmur as a moment, but again they broke forth until the chief rising from his chair loudly demanded silence. A solemn stillness reigned through the vast hall; but at that instant the

sound of a horse dashing rapidly across the drawbridge arrested the attention of all. The sound ceased, but a moment after there was a disturbance at the lower end of the hall, and the figure of a knight, armed in proof, and fiery red with speed, appeared forcing his way towards the preceptor. He reached the open space before the chair of state, and handed the chief a note.

"Quick, quick, my lord, read it. 'Tis on business of moment."

The preceptor tore open the billet. It contained these lines:

"The lion has broken its fetters. Richard of England has escaped from his Austrian dungeon. Malvoisin is arrested; the preceptory of Templeton has been destroyed. Come with all your knights to the village to meet the grand-master, at yonder village. Quick, prepare!"

"By whom was this sent?" said he, turning to the messenger.

"By De Beaumanoir. Sir Eustace of Pembroke is marching towards you."

"Ah! Is it so?" said the preceptor, springing from his chair. "Arm, sons of the temple, arm! The foe of our order has escaped. Mount, mount, and follow our banner! This moment we must leave these walls to meet the grand-master, at yonder village. Quick, prepare!"

A loud shout burst from the knights as they rushed from the hall.

"My lord, you have forgotten the prisoners," said Sir Hugo to the preceptor.

"No, not forgotten. Sir Edward Westworth, you are condemned to death. Ho, men, say to the retainers, who yet lingered in the hall, 'bear this knight to the dungeon where the lady is confined, and then return to me.'"

The servants seized the prisoner, and dragged him away.

"Now, Sir Hugo, are you satisfied? But, come, we have no time to lose. Sir Eustace of Pembroke will be here within an hour. To horse, to horse!"

They rode forth from that grim old preceptory, a strong, a noble body of men. The white garments of the knights with the blood red cross upon the left shoulder, shone amid the dusky color of their retainers, while the splendid trappings of their horses, and the wild, oriental music of the band gave to the scene an air of gaiety and grandeur. Sir Hugo, with a look of anger and impatience, rode by the side of the preceptor.

They had passed into the forest, when a thought seemed suddenly to occur to the mind of the former, for, turning quickly round, he said: "The books, the records of our order, have been left behind, they must be saved. I will return for them," and without waiting for an answer, the knight wheeled his horse, and rode swiftly back to the castle. He galloped over the drawbridge into the now silent and deserted courtyard. Quickly dismounting he passed into the room of the ladies, and seized a small casket of jewelry. Then opening the large door that led to the dungeons of the castle, he lighted a lamp, and began his descent. Rapidly he made his way along narrow passages and dismal vaults, until he passed before the lowest dungeon beneath the castle.

With an effort he threw open the iron door, which grated on its rusty hinges, and passed into the cell of Edward and Rosa. The former was standing, chained in the middle of the room, gazing upon Rosa, who had fallen into an unconscious slumber. Both started as Sir Hugo entered the cell. Without noticing Edward, he placed the lamp upon a small table, and approached Rosa. A belt of iron had been fastened round her waist, to which was attached a chain, which was itself fastened to the wall. Selecting a key, Sir Hugo opened the belt which confined her, and Rosa was free. Astonishment had kept the prisoners silent, but at this Edward demanded: "What means this, Sir Hugo D'Aubrey?"

"That you are still a prisoner, and that Rosa is free. You shall remain here and starve, while your wife shall accompany me."

"Never cried Rosa, running towards Edward, and clasping her arms about his neck. 'Never! Sooner would I die with my husband, than live in splendor with such a one as you.'"

"I saw how it would be," said Hugo, with a sneer. "Come, Lady Rosa, you must and shall go with me." As he said this, he seized her by the arm.

"Help! Help!" faintly shrieked the girl.

"Your cries are vain; no one is here to help you, the preceptory is deserted. Release her, Sir Edward, or by Heaven, you shall die in her presence!"

"Villain, you dare not part us."

"Indeed," said Hugo. "At the same moment he grasped Rosa with all his strength, and tore her shrieking from Sir Edward's arms. He rushed to the door of the cell, but at that instant a loud shout was heard above, there was a rush of many feet, a glare of torches, and a knight armed in proof stood before him.

"Ah, what have we here?" the stranger loudly demanded.

"Sir Eustace of Pembroke," cried Edward, "rescue that lady if you are a true knight."

"What, this is Sir Hugo D'Aubrey," said the stranger. "Do then, do, and receive the doom you so justly merit!" The sword of Sir Eustace was sheathed in Sir Hugo's breast, and the traitor fell dead upon the dungeon floor.

"I came in good time, Sir Edward. The shrieks of this lady alarmed me; to her you owe your rescue. But came with me, the king will be here anon."

Through the powerful influence of Richard of England, Sir Edward procured a dispensation from the pope, and was in consequence released from his vows. A happy day it was for him when he carried Rosa to his castle, and the loud shouts of the servants rang through the halls, and her mother awaited her in the doorway to welcome the Templar's Bride.

SMALL FAULTS.—There are more often darkened by the continual recurrence of small faults than by the actual presence of any decided vice. These evils are apparently of very dissimilar magnitude; yet it is easier to grapple with the one than the other.

(Written for The Flag of our Union.)

FLOWERS.

BY W. W. BROWN.

And have not flowers a language? Who shall say
These lovely petals have with every day
And grouped in every form, so fitly cast
In beauty's varying mould, that each doth seem
A verse in itself, outliving each
In loveliness? Ah, shall I tell you these
Have not a language for the heart of man—
A language pure, all eloquent with love,
Beaming with joy and radiant with light,
All heavenly?

And they, too, have a voice,
Breathing in tones of glowing tenderness,
That fall in love, sweet accents on the grateful ear,
And like low murmurs of the Sabbath choir,
Singing within the heart's deep, nobler thoughts,
And kindling devotion in every breast.
Flowers speak to us of faith, of trusting hope
Kiss every blossom holds a lesson forth—
Bearing their tender leaves in every nook
Nest Heaven's protecting power alone.
Seest thou a joyous peep their presence brings
Under the sick man, or his suffering couch?
His drooping spirit brightens 'neath their breath—
He hears the murmurs of their gentle tones
Whispering to him of heaven, and to joy—
Until he almost dreams some angel pair
Is bending o'er him!

And childhood loves
To claim companionship with them, for they
Are emblems of itself—of innocence,
Of brightest hopes, and all that childhood is.
Ah, rightly called the "poetry of earth,"
For there is taught of love's sweet words—
Of unselfish goodness, self-denial, or truth—
But ye shadow forth! Teach us alike
Thy language's noble flow and its pure thoughts,
That we may join them in the silver strains
And catch the fervor of their aspirations high.

(Written for The Flag of our Union.)

LITTLE FLOY:

—OR—

HOW A MISER WAS RECLAIMED.

BY HORATIO ALGER, JR.

Or all the houses which Martin Kendrick owned, he used the oldest and meanest for his own habitation. It was an old tumble-down building on a narrow street, which had already lived out more than its appointed term of service, and was no longer fit to "cumber the ground." But the owner clung to it, he more, perhaps, because it stood there in its decay, ugly and weather-beaten, it was no unfit emblem of himself.

Martin the miser! Years of voluntary privation such as in most cases follows only in the train of the extreme penury, had given him a claim to the appellation. It might be considered somewhat inconsistent with his natural character that, with the exception of the one room which he occupied, the remainder of the large house was left tenanted. After all, it was not so difficult to account for. He could not bear the idea of having immediate neighbors. Who knows but they might seize the opportunity afforded by his absence, and rob him of the gains of many years which, distracting banks and other places of deposit, he kept in a strong box under his own immediate charge.

Martin had not always been a miser. No one ever becomes so at once, though doubtless the propensity to it is stronger in some than in others. Years ago—so many that at this time the recollection came to him dimly, like the faint sound of an almost forgotten tune—years ago when the blood of youth poured its impetuous current through his veins, he married a fair girl, whose life he had shortened by his dissipated habits, and the indifference and even cruelty to which they led.

The day of his wife's death the last remnant of the property which he inherited from his father escaped from his grasp. Those two events, either of which brought his own sorrow, completely colored him. The object of affection to which he had reduced himself was brought vividly to his mind, and he formed a sudden resolution, rushing, as will sometimes happen, from one extreme to the other, that as prodigal as his past life had been, that which succeeded should be as sparing and penurious in the same degree, until, at least, he had recovered his losses, and, so far as fortune went, was restored to the same position which he had occupied at the commencement of his career.

But it is not for man to say, "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther,"—to give himself up body and soul to one engrossing pursuit, and at the end of a limited time wean himself from it.

Habit grows by what it feeds on. It was not long before the passion of acquisition acquired a controlling influence over the mind of Martin Kendrick. He reached the point which he had proscribed to himself, but it stayed him not. Every day his privations, self-imposed though they were, became more pinching, his craving for gold more insatiable. Long ago he had cut himself off from all friendship—all acquaintance, save of a business character—all the pleasures and amenities of social intercourse. He made no visits, save to his tenants, and those only on quarter day. Not were these visits of an agreeable character to those favored with them, for Martin was not a merciful landlord. He invariably demanded the strictest farthing that was his due, and neither sickness nor lack of employment had the power for a moment to soften his heart or delay the execution of his purpose. His mind was drawn into itself, and like an uncultivated field, was left to all the barrenness of desolation. Such is always the case when a man by his own act shuts himself out from his kind, forgoes their sympathy and kind offices, and virtually says, "I am sufficient unto myself."

Martin had one child, a girl, named Florence. At the time of her mother's death she was but six years of age. He had loved her, perhaps, as much as it was in his power to love any one, as long as she remained with him he did not withdraw himself so entirely from human companionship. But at the age of seventeen she became acquainted with a young man—a mechanic—in whose favor her affections were soon

enlisted. He proposed for her hand, but her father, in whom the love of gold was strong, on account of his poverty, drove him with scorn from his door.

The young man was not to be balked thus. He contrived to meet Florence secretly, and after a while persuaded her to forsake her home, and under her fortune with him—with the less difficulty, since that home offered but few attractions to one of her age.

Her father's indignation was extreme. All advances towards reconciliation on the part of the newly-wedded pair were received with bitterness of scorn, which effectually prevented their repetition. From that time Martin Kendrick settled down into the cold, apathetic, and solitary existence which has been described above. Gradually the love of gain blotted out from his remembrance the remembrance of his children, whom he never met. They had removed from the city, though he knew it not, and the total want of interest which he displayed respecting them, discouraged any idea which they might have entertained of informing him.

"It's a cold night," quoth Martin to himself, as he sat before the last glimmering which could decently be called a fire in the apartment which he occupied. He cast a wistful glance towards a pile of wood which lay beside the grate. He lifted one, and poised it for a moment, glancing, meanwhile, at the fire, as if he was debating in his mind whether he had best place it on. He shook his head, however, as it were too great a piece of extravagance to be thought of, and so left it back. He then moved his chair nearer the fire, as if satisfied that this would produce additional warmth without the drawback of expense.

It was indeed a cold night. The chill blasts swept with relentless rigor through the streets, sending travellers home with quickened step, and causing the guardians of the public peace, as they stood at their appointed stations, to wrap their overcoats more closely about them. On many a hearth the fire blazed brightly, in composed defiance of the insidious visitor who shuns the abodes of opulence, but forces his unwelcome entry into the habitations of the poor.

A child, tightly clad, was running through the streets. Every gust as it swept along chilled her completely through, and, at length, unable to go farther, she sank down at the portal of Martin Kendrick's dwelling. Extreme cold gave her courage, and, with a trembling hand, she lifted the huge knocker. It fell from her nerveless grasp, and the unwelcome sound penetrated into the room where Martin sat cowering over his feeble fire. He was startled—terrified even—as the unusual sound came to his ears, echoing through the empty rooms in the old house.

"Who can it be? Robbers?" thought he, as he walked to the door. "I will wait and see if it is repeated."

"Who's there?" he exclaimed, in a somewhat tremulous voice, as he stood with his hand upon the latch.

"It's me," said a low, shivering voice from without.

"And who's he?"

"Floy, little Floy," was the answer.

"And what do you want here at this time of night?"

"I am freezing. Let me come in and sit by the fire, if you please. I mean to call you upon your steps."

The old man deliberated.

"You're sure you're not trying to get in after my money—what little I have? There isn't anybody with you, is there?"

"No one. There is only me, O, sir, do let me in! I am so cold!"

The belt was cautiously withdrawn, and Martin, opening a crack, peered forth, suspiciously. But the only object that met his gaze was a little girl, of ten years of age, crouching on the steps in a vain effort to avail herself of all the natural warmth she had.

"Will you let me come in?" said she, imploringly.

"You had better go somewhere else. I haven't much of a fire. I don't keep much, it burns out fast so fast. You had better go where they keep better fires."

"O, sir, the least fire will relieve me so much, and I haven't strength to go any farther!"

"Well, you may come in, if you're sure you haven't come to steal anything."

"I never steal. I'm honest."

"Ugh! Well, I hope you'll remember it."

This was the end.

He led her into the little room which he occupied. She sprang to the fire, little Floy, as it was, and eagerly spread out both hands before it. She seemed actually to drink in the heat, so scanty it was, so welcome did it prove to her chilled and benumbed limbs.

A touch of humanity came to the miser, or perhaps his own experience of the cold stimulated him to the act, for after a few moments' deliberation he took two sticks from the pile of fuel and threw them upon the fire. They crackled and burnt, diffusing, for the time, a cheerful warmth about the apartment. The little girl looked up gratefully, and thanked him for what she regarded as an act of kindness to herself.

"Floy's high, very high, and it takes a fearful quantity to keep a fire going."

"But what a pleasant fire it makes," said the little girl, as she looked at the flames curling fantastically aloft.

"Why, yes," said Martin, in a soliloquizing tone, "it is comfortable, but it wouldn't do to have it burn so bright. It would ruin me completely."

"Then you are poor?" said the little girl, looking about the room. The furniture was scanty, consisting only of the most indispensable articles, and those of the cheapest kind. They had been all picked up at second-hand stores for little or nothing.

It is no wonder that little Floy asked the question. Nevertheless, the miser looked suspiciously at her, as if there were some covert meaning in her words. But she looked so openly and frankly at him, as quite to disarm any suspicions he might entertain.

"Poor!" he at length answered. "Yes, I am, or should be if I plunged into extravagant living and expenses of every kind," and he looked half regretfully at the sticks which had burned out, and were now smouldering in the grate.

"Well," said Floy, "I am poor, too, and so were father and mother. But I think I am poorer than you, for I have no home at all, no house to live in, and no fire to keep me warm."

"Then where do you live?" asked the miser.

"I don't live anywhere," said the child, simply.

"But where do you stay?"

"Where I can. I generally walk about the streets in the day time, and when I feel cold I go into some store to warm myself. They don't always let me stay long. They call me a beggar, and a beggar, I suppose," she continued, casting a glance at her thin dress, which in some places was torn and dirty, from long wearing. "I suppose it's all true, but I can't help it."

"Where do you think of going to night?" asked Martin, abruptly.

"I don't know. I haven't any place to go to, and it's very cold. Would you let me stay here?" asked the child, imploringly.

The miser started.

"How can you stay here? Here's only one room, and this I occupy."

"Let me lie down on the floor anywhere. It will be better than to go out into the cold streets."

The miser paused. Even he, callous as his heart had become, would not willingly thrust out a young child into the street, where, in all probability, unless succor came, she would perish from the severity of the weather.

After a little consideration, he took the fragment of a candle which was burning on the table, and bidding Floy follow him, led the way into a room near by, which was quite destitute of furniture, save a small cot-bed in the corner.

It had been left there when Martin Kendrick first took possession of the house, and had remained undisturbed ever since. A quilt which, though tattered, was still thick and warm, was spread over it.

"There," said Martin, pointing it out to Floy, who followed him closely, "there is a bed. It hasn't been slept in for a great many years, but I suppose it will do as well as any other. You can sleep there, if you want to."

"Then I shall have a bed to sleep in," said Floy, joyfully. "It is sometimes since I have slept on anything softer than a board, or perhaps a rug."

Martin was about to leave her alone, when he changed to think that the room would be dark.

"You can't see in the dark, can't you?" he inquired. "I haven't got but one light. I can't afford to keep more."

"O, I shan't take my clothes off at all," said the young girl. "I never do."

She got into bed, spread the quilt over her, and was asleep in less than five minutes.

Martin Kendrick went back to his room. He did not immediately retire to bed, but sat for a few minutes pondering on the extraordinary chance, for in his case it was certainly extraordinary, which had thrown a young girl as it were under his protection, though but for a limited time. He was somewhat bewildered, so unexpectedly had the event happened, and could scarcely even now realize that it was so.

But the warning sound of a neighboring church-clock, as it proclaimed midnight, interrupted the train of his reflections, and he prepared for bed, not neglecting, so strongly was the feeling of suspicion implanted in him, to secure the door by means of a bolt. When he awoke the sun was shining through the windows of his room. He had barely dressed himself when a faint knock was heard at the door of his room. Opening it a little ways, he saw Floy standing before him.

"What you here now?" he inquired.

"Yes. Where should I go? Besides, I did not want to unlock the front door without your permission."

"That is quite right," said Martin. "Some one who was ill-disposed might have entered and stolen that, if he could have found anything worth taking."

"And now, sir, if you please, I'll make your bed," said the child, entering the room. "I've made the one I sleep in."

Martin looked on without a word, while Floy, taking his silence for assent, proceeded to roll back the clothes, shake the bed vigorously, and then spread them over again. Eying a broom at one corner of the room, she took it and swept up the hearth neatly. She then glanced towards the miser who had been looking her motions, as if to ascertain whether they met with his approval.

"So you can work," said he, after a pause.

"O yes, mother used to teach me! I wish," said she, after a while, brightening up as if struck with a new idea, "I wish you would let me stay here, and I would work for you. I would make your very best, take care of your room, and keep everything nice. Besides I could get your dinners."

"Stay with me! Impossible. I don't have much to do, besides I couldn't afford it."

"I want cost you anything," said Floy, earnestly. "I know how to sew, and when I am not doing something for you, I can sew for money, and give it to you."

This idea seemed to produce some impression upon the miser's mind.

"But how do I know," said he, a portion of his old suspicions returning, "how do I know but you will steal off some day, and carry something with you?"

"I never steal," said Floy, half indignantly; "besides, I have no place to go to if I should leave here."

This was true, and Martin, considering that it would be against her interest to injure him in any such way, an argument which weighed more heavily than any prostration on her part would have done, at length said:

"Well, you may stay, at least a while. I suppose you are hungry. There's a loaf of bread in the closet. You may eat some of it, but don't eat too much. It's—it's harmful to the health to eat too much."

"When will you be home to get some dinner?" asked the child.

"About noon. Perhaps I will bring some sewing for you to do."

"O, I hope you will! It will seem so nice to be obliged to be walking about the streets, but to be seated in a pleasant room, sewing."

When Martin came home at noon, instead of finding the room cheerless and cold as he had been wont, the fire was burning brightly, diffusing a pleasant warmth about the apartment.

Floy had set the table in the centre of the room, with some difficulty, it must be confessed, for it was rickety, and would not stand even, owing to one of the legs being shorter than the rest.

This, however, she had remedied by placing a chip under the deficient member. There was no cloth on, for this was an article which Martin did not number among his possessions. Floy had substituted two towels which united covered perhaps half the table.

A portion of the loaf, for there was but one, she had toasted by the fire, and this had been placed on a separate plate from the other. On the whole, therefore, though it was far from being a sumptuous repast, everything looked clean and neat, and this alone added increased zest to the appetite. At least, Martin felt more of an appetite than usual, and between them the two despatched all that had been provided.

"Is there any more bread in the closet?" asked Martin.

"No," said Floy, "it is all gone."

"Then I must bring some home when I return to supper."

"I have been thinking," said Floy, hesitatingly, "that if you would trust me to do so, and would bring home the materials, I would make some bread, and that would be cheaper than buying it, and besides it would give me something to do."

"Well," said Martin, as he looked with an air of surprise at the diminutive form of little Floy. "Do you know how to make bread? How came a child like you to learn?"

"Mother used to be sick a good deal," said Floy, "and was confined to her bed so that she could do nothing herself. She used to direct me what to do, so that after a while I came to know how to cook as well as she."

"Well, what shall I have to bring home?" asked the miser, whom the hint of his being cheaper had existed in favor of the plan.

"Let me see," said Floy, as she sat down, and began to reflect. "There's flour and saleratus, and salt, but we've got the salt, so you need only get the first two."

"Very well, I will attend to it. O, I forgot to ask which you know how to do. Can you make shirts?"

"Yes, I have made a good many."

"Then I will bring you home some to-night if I can get any."

When she had cleared away the dinner dishes, washed them, and put them in the closet, an operation which the simplicity of the meal rendered so easy, Floy began to look round her to see what else she could do. A desire seized her to explore the old house, of which so many rooms had for years remained deserted. They were bare and desolate, inhabited only by spiders and crickets, who occupied them rent-free. It might have been years, perhaps, since they had echoed to the steps of a human foot.

They looked dark and gloomy enough, have been witness to many a dark deed of midnight assassination. But it was all fancy, doubtless, and in little Floy, they produced no other feeling than that of childishness. She rummaged all the closets with a feeling of curiosity, but found nothing in any one of them to reward her search until she came to the last. There was a large roll of something on the floor, which, on examination, proved to be a small carpet, quite dirty, and somewhat moth-eaten. It had probably been left there inadvertently, and remained undisturbed until the present moment. Floy spread it out, and examined it critically. An idea struck her which she hastened to put into execution. Threading her way back to the miser's room, she procured a stout stick which stood in the corner, and going back, gave the carpet a sound beating, which soon stifled her with dust. Nevertheless, she persevered, and soon got it into quite a respectable state of cleanliness. She then managed, by a considerable effort, to lug it to Martin's room, and in an hour or so had spread it out, and finally fastened it by means of some tacks which she found in one corner of the closet. The effect was certainly wonderful. The carpet actually gave the room a very cozy and comfortable appearance; and little Floy took considerable credit to herself for the metamorphosis.

"What will he say?" thought she. "I wonder whether he will be pleased?"

It was but a few minutes after this change had been effected that Martin came in. It was about three o'clock, sooner than Floy expected him, but he had thought that she might require the material early in order to make preparations for the evening meal.

As he opened the door he started back in surprise at the changed appearance of the room. It occurred to him for a moment that he had strayed into the wrong place, but the sight of Floy sitting at the window reassured him, and he went in.

"What is all this?" he inquired, in a bewildered tone.

Floy enjoyed his surprise. She told him in what manner she had effected the change, and asked him if he did not like it. He could not do otherwise than answer in the affirmative, and in truth an unusual sense of comfort came over him, as he sat down, and looked about him.

Floy had taken possession of the floor, and was already busy in kneading it.

"Now," said she, after this was done, "I must put it down by the fire to rise. That will not take long, and then it will be ready to bake."

"Have you got any shirts for me?" she inquired, after a while.

"Yes," said Martin, recollecting himself, and unrolling a bundle which he had placed on the table. "There are half a dozen for you to begin with. If you do them well, you can have some more."

Floy looked pleased.

"Now," said she, "I shall have something to do when you are away."

"You like to be doing something?" said Martin, inquiringly.

"O yes, I can't bear to be idle."

Martin did not go out again that afternoon. When Martin came home at noon, instead of finding the room cheerless and cold as he had been wont, the fire was burning brightly, diffusing a pleasant warmth about the apartment.

Floy had set the table in the centre of the room, with some difficulty, it must be confessed, for it was rickety, and would not stand even, owing to one of the legs being shorter than the rest.

This, however, she had remedied by placing a chip under the deficient member. There was no cloth on, for this was an article which Martin did not number among his possessions. Floy had substituted two towels which united covered perhaps half the table.

A portion of the loaf, for there was but one, she had toasted by the fire, and this had been placed on a separate plate from the other. On the whole, therefore, though it was far from being a sumptuous repast, everything looked clean and neat, and this alone added increased zest to the appetite. At least, Martin felt more of an appetite than usual, and between them the two despatched all that had been provided.

"Is there any more bread in the closet?" asked Martin.

"No," said Floy, "it is all gone."

"Then I must bring some home when I return to supper."

"I have been thinking," said Floy, hesitatingly, "that if you would trust me to do so, and would bring home the materials, I would make some bread, and that would be cheaper than buying it, and besides it would give me something to do."

"Well," said Martin, as he looked with an air of surprise at the diminutive form of little Floy. "Do you know how to make bread? How came a child like you to learn?"

"Mother used to be sick a good deal," said Floy, "and was confined to her bed so that she could do nothing herself. She used to direct me what to do, so that after a while I came to know how to cook as well as she."

"Well, what shall I have to bring home?" asked the miser, whom the hint of his being cheaper had existed in favor of the plan.

"Let me see," said Floy, as she sat down, and began to reflect. "There's flour and saleratus, and salt, but we've got the salt, so you need only get the first two."

"Very well, I will attend to it. O, I forgot to ask which you know how to do. Can you make shirts?"

"Yes, I have made a good many."

"Then I will bring you home some to-night if I can get any."

When she had cleared away the dinner dishes, washed them, and put them in the closet, an operation which the simplicity of the meal rendered so easy, Floy began to look round her to see what else she could do. A desire seized her to explore the old house, of which so many rooms had for years remained deserted. They were bare and desolate, inhabited only by spiders and crickets, who occupied them rent-free. It might have been years, perhaps, since they had echoed to the steps of a human foot.

They looked dark and gloomy enough, have been witness to many a dark deed of midnight assassination. But it was all fancy, doubtless, and in little Floy, they produced no other feeling than that of childishness. She rummaged all the closets with a feeling of curiosity, but found nothing in any one of them to reward her search until she came to the last. There was a large roll of something on the floor, which, on examination, proved to be a small carpet, quite dirty, and somewhat moth-eaten. It had probably been left there inadvertently, and remained undisturbed until the present moment. Floy spread it out, and examined it critically. An idea struck her which she hastened to put into execution. Threading her way back to the miser's room, she procured a stout stick which stood in the corner, and going back, gave the carpet a sound beating, which soon stifled her with dust. Nevertheless, she persevered, and soon got it into quite a respectable state of cleanliness. She then managed, by a considerable effort, to lug it to Martin's room, and in an hour or so had spread it out, and finally fastened it by means of some tacks which she found in one corner of the closet. The effect was certainly wonderful. The carpet actually gave the room a very cozy and comfortable appearance; and little Floy took considerable credit to herself for the metamorphosis.

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"Is there any more bread in the closet?" asked Martin.

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

LONG AGO.

BY T. D. WILKINS.

Oreilles will memory ponder
On the days of old, gone;
Till, within myself, I wonder
At the scenes that greet my eye.
Scenes believing that the treasure
Which the past's dust has shown,
Were indeed, sweet, living pleasures,
Owned by me, long, long ago.

Where smelt the verdant meadows
Of youth's happy days I played,
Catching snailshells—not the shadows,
As along life's path I strayed.
There were merry hours of gladness,
How swiftly would they go,
All unaltered by care or sadness,
In the days of long ago.

Ally dreams of lands Elysian
Floated o'er my raptured mind;
O, that each sweet pasting vision
Now my longing heart could find.
That I now could call the flowers
Which alone in memory grow;
And once more enjoy the hours
That have fled in long ago.

Childhood forms now gather round me
Forms I loved so dear to me;
They to by-gone years have bound me,
Made the past so dear to me,
That in memory's hall I wander
By their rivers' soothing flow;
Loving still to dream, and ponder
O'er bright moments in long ago.

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

THE AUSTRALIAN FOOTMAN. A ROMANCE IN THE ANTPODES.

BY JAMES DE MILLE.

CHAPTER I.

SHOWING HOW LOW THE GOLD FEVER MAY
REDUCE A MAN.

It was morning in Sydney harbor. The wharves were crowded with shipping from all parts of the world which were already filled with workmen busily engaged in unloading the cargoes. The hum of the thousands in the city beginning their daily work, rose into the air and spread far over the country.

It was a noble scene. Before the city spread the noble bay which forms one of the finest harbors in the world, all smooth and untroubled, for scarce a breath of wind disturbed the air. Exciting the water rose the green shores, here verdant and smiling with fertile meadows, and there wooded and shaded by pleasant groves or orchards. Ships lay around upon the face of the water, from whose masts floated the flag of many a nation, some slowly borne on by the tide, with the wide spread sails flapping idly against the mast, others swinging slowly from their fast anchors. And queen of all this peaceful scene—appeared the metropolis of Australia, with its white houses, lofty spires, and thronged wharves—thus she appeared—sitting in the prime of youth, laying aside her maidenhood to wed the world.

Among a crowd of passengers who had just landed from one of the newly arrived emigrant ships, two youths might be seen, whose appearance denoted a station in life much above that of their fellow voyagers. One was a tall man, with a noble figure, in which strength and beauty were finely blended, and a countenance upon which rested an expression of frankness. His features were handsome, his hair being dark and glossy, his eyes black, and gleaming beneath his brows as though they might read the soul. His companion was a merry-hearted fellow, with lively features and a pleasant smile.

"Well, Melville, here we are at last," said the younger of the two. "And now what do you propose to do?"

"Stay here of course. Why, Marden, my boy, what else is there to do?"

"Have you forgotten all that we heard coming in?"

"What—that it is hard to live here now—that the emigrant ships—that the diggings are crowded? Why, I believe it."

"Well, what will you do?"

"I'll look out for a situation."

"Pray, how much money have you?"

"Just half a crown, my dear friend," said Melville, laughingly tossing two silver pieces into the air.

"Half a crown! What! Why, I have five pounds, and expect to starve on that."

"My dear boy. A man who has his waist about him need never starve in this world."

"Well, I do not see what we can do in Sydney. I thought the diggings were not more than twenty miles from here, and I find they are more than a hundred miles from Melbourne, which is, goodness knows, how many miles from this place."

"Well, Marden, take my advice and be philosophical."

"Be philosophical! It was very well to be so at Oxford, when a fellow lost a few pounds or owed a debt to some tradesman, but it's no go when a fellow is ever so many thousands miles from home, and only in the possession of enough to keep him from starving."

"Do you know how much the immaculate Johnson, who came home so rich, had when he landed at Melbourne?"

"No."

"Just sixpence halfpenny."

"The dickens! Now I tell you I'll put off for Melbourne. That's the land, my hearty!"

"Nonsense—you won't do any such thing."

"Yes, I must. I can't do anything here. I want to get to the diggings."

"Pooh, Marden. Don't be cast down. I don't care, though. I am worse off than you."

"You can't leave here, unless you become a bootblack or a servant."

"By the lord Harry then, I would be a servant."

"What! you would—the brilliant, the aristocratic Melville—the 'double first' at Oxford! Bah!"

Certainly. Why not? The truly great man is he who will not let anything cast him down. In short, if the proud Dame Fortune tries to knock him down she can't come it. That's the doctrine, my boy."

"Well, my mind is made up. I will go to Melbourne."

"What—go to Melbourne! O nonsense!"

"I will, certainly. What will you do here? Come with me to Melbourne. We can find a situation there."

"No, not more easily than here. In fact I believe that it is much more crowded."

"Hang it, I wish I had stayed at home."

"But since you are out here, put it through, Marden."

"Ah, well," said he, with a sigh. "I suppose I'll have to—and I must be off this morning for Melbourne. The sooner the better, for I have little money left. We must part, old fellow. I don't see what you can do here, though."

"I can earn a living. I have no friends to be ashamed of me here in the antipodes. I suppose you'd be the vessel for Melbourne," said he, pointing to one of the next wharf, on which was a notice to that effect.

"Yes, that is the one."

"Well, I will help to carry your baggage there. My wife will remain here. I am sorry we must separate, but since we seek our fortunes, let us do what we think best. Come on."

And the two youths bearing Marden's trunk, walked over to the Melbourne packet, which was soon to start. Many others appeared upon the wharves who were about to leave Sydney. Some were pale and sickly looking, others appeared like desperadoes; others had a faint gleam of hope on their countenances, but ah, very faint.

"Look at those who have starved here, Melville. Can you stay? No, come. Let me go back and help you here with your trunk."

"No, no, I will remain."

"But, old fellow, do let me divide this money with you."

"Thank you, Marden, you are a generous fellow—too generous. But I would not think of it. I have no fear but that I can live."

An hour after Melville stood watching the packet, as with all sails set, she left the wharf, and sailed slowly out of the harbor. The wind springing up carried them away, and Melville, as the vessel lessened in the distance, bade good-by to the last of those friends which reminded him of home.

"Now courage!" he murmured to himself—"just let us sit down and form some plans."

He walked over to his trunk, and sat for a while. Strange situation for a well born and well-educated gentleman! To be on a foreign shore, with but half a crown in money, and a few clothes in a small trunk as his worldly goods. After a while he opened the trunk, and taking out a piece of cake, made his morning meal.

"And now for business," said he, shouldering his trunk.

He walked off with it to a small boarding-house near by, where he opened it and took out all his good clothes. These he carried to a pawnbroker's who gave him twelve pounds for the lot.

"Hurrah!" he cried, "twelve pounds! That I think will help me along for awhile."

He then bought a set of rough clothes, and going to his lodgings, put them on, after which he went back and sold his last suit of good clothes for three pounds more.

"Fifteen pounds! I have now. Good—again! I will have my watch yet to sell if anything happens. But nonsense, with fifteen pounds I can make a fortune. I may as well prepare now for prosperity as for antipodes."

On the following morning there appeared among the strange crowds of people who thronged the Australian capital, a man of most striking appearance. His air was high bred, but his clothes were coarse, and he walked up and down with a large barrow filled with confectionery. He looked around upon all the people with a smile of unutterable complacency, as though he were perfectly content with himself and the world.

It was Melville!

"Ha, ha, ha!" he chuckled to himself. "I think I see myself starting. By Jove, wouldn't Aldborough laugh if he were to see me here? And my eldest brother, the baronet—the head of the family—shouldn't I like him to see me now! Ha, ha!"

"Confectionary, confectionary," he cried, bursting into a louder tone of voice, which rang forth clear and deep-toned as a bell. "Confectionary!" and then he added with grotesque modulations of his voice, "Confectionary!"

"By Jove, how this reminds me of the little fellow in London. I'll go the complete candy-seller. I might as well."

"Ladies and gentlemen! Here's your fine candy, juicy apples, oranges, cakes and tarts! Heave's your chance!"

He displayed the most imperturbable calmness, walked up to ladies in the streets with the utmost nonchalance, to sell his things, and they, pleased with his uncommonly handsome face and fascinating manner, invariably bought.

The ladies! Bless their little hearts!" said he, glancing at the last two whom he met. "And that little one—what eyes! what a smile!"

Who can she be, and where does she live? She looked so bewitchingly at me! I'll follow, and see where she lives."

Melville slowly walked after them, keeping at a proper distance. When they stopped at a house or shop, he also stopped at another, till they went on again. Over his saw the younger occasionally glance his head toward him, and almost fancied that she encouraged him.

"What a lovely creature!" he muttered to himself. "Ah, there is her house, now. By Jove I have it!"

He marked it carefully, and passing by saw the name upon the door-plate. Henry Inglis.

"A finely sounding name. I heard her friend call her Emily—Emily Inglis. Ah, how dear is the name! If I were but rich, now. But I

can adorn her image till I become so. Yet what hope is there in this contemtable business! Bah! never mind. I'll stick to it till something turns up."

On the following morning, Melville dressed as before, with his barrow of confectionery, went along Summer street where Mr. Inglis resided. It was a large stone house, four stories high, and one of the best in Sydney. He rang at the door and after a time Emily herself came. She started, and a half smile came across her beautiful face. Melville himself for the first time in his life, felt embarrassed—bait he spoke up, and in the tone of a courier, said:

"Fair maiden—can a poor confectioner offer you anything this morning?"

"What have you?" said she, with a sweet smile.

He brought in his trays and the beautiful girl bent down over them, while her long, dark tresses hid her face from view. Melville's heart beat with delight.

"You will find there as good candy as any in the city," he said at length, in a business way.

She selected a large quantity.

"O thank you, thank you, fair lady, for your kindness to a poor man like me."

"You are a stranger here, are you not?"

"Yes, I arrived only yesterday morning."

"From England?"

"Yes, and another friend came with me, but he is off to Melbourne."

"And will you not go?"

"I decided to stay here when he left, and now I could not—would not leave this place for the world."

"You are prospering, then?" said she, with embarrassment, for Melville's dark eyes rested meaningly upon her.

"Yes, and happy. I have my little—"

"Emmie, said a voice at the head of the stairs."

"Yes, pa, I am coming. Please bring some more to-morrow, good man," added she, in a louder voice, "and if you hear of a footman who wants a place, send him here."

"Thank you, miss," said he, in the tone of a hawker, again. "I will do so. I am very much obliged, miss, for your custom, miss, and I hope it will be continued, if I can do anything to please you, miss."

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acts as though he had been accustomed to the best society. How on earth came he to be a footman!"

Emily's heart beat—she knew why, but she said nothing.

Several weeks passed away, and it was a lovely evening. The sun was fast descending behind the western hills, and a cool breeze from the ocean blew refreshingly upon the city. Many carriages rolled along the roads which led into the country. Men of all classes promenade the streets after the toll of the day, and nearly all labor had ceased.

Emily and her father rode along one of the avenues which lie without the city. It was a quiet place, for few people were there. Around lay green fields, orchards and groves, pastures where cattle grazed, and vast fields filled with flocks of sheep. Melville rode behind at a little distance, gazing upon Emily as though his whole soul were wrapped up in her.

"What will not a man do for love! Here am I a servant for Emily's sake. Beautiful girl. I would do a thousand times as much to gain some of those tender glances which she at times bestows upon me."

"Emily," said her father, "Is not your horse restive? He starts. I fear he will be troublesome."

"O no, father, it is only his spirit."

Melville gazed anxiously at the horse, which occasionally started, rearing a little and swinging his head in a vicious manner.

"Take care! O heavens!" suddenly cried Mr. Inglis, as Emily's horse started at the sight of a blasted tree. He snatched at the reins. The horse, disturbed by this unexpected attack, reared up and pranced furiously.

"Father! I save me!" cried the terrified girl. Her father sprang once more at the reins—the horse darted forward, and then with a wild neigh, stretched out his head, and away he went, away, with the speed of the wind!

"O God! O heaven!" cried the father, in agony.

For a moment Melville paused—for an instant—and then lashing his horse he rushed on furiously in pursuit of the frightened steed of Emily. On they went, the pursuing and the pursued. People who were in the road, seeing the fierce beast, shrunk away. Emily, pale as marble, still kept her seat, clinging to her horse, but every moment expecting death. She heard the voice of one pursuing, and her heart told her who it was.

Away they went, and nothing was gained on either side. Melville shuddered, and beat his horse to increase his speed—a little was gained, but not enough to admit of hope. On they went. At length the road took a long winding around a spot where the ground made a descent, and ended in a deep gully. Emily's horse followed the road and sped on in his headlong course.

Melville suddenly paused, and looked at the gully. The ground descended gently, the gully was about twelve feet wide, but its perpendicular sides descended to an unseen depth—stones and rocks were strewn around on both sides.

Melville sat his month tightly, and lashed his horse. With one spring he cleared the stone wall of the field, and then dashed furiously over the stony ground. It was a fearful sight. Emily saw it as she clung closely to her horse, and the yawning gulf and the fearful deed of Melville took away all thought of herself. She screamed in agony.

But on went the brave horse—on to the deep gully. He prepared—Melville lashed him. One spring—one bound—and the deep chasm was cleared, and away he went—the brave youth, up the other side. Another bound and he was over into the road, just as the horse of Emily, all foaming and perspiring, came up. He reared before the horse, and with a giant grasp seized the bridle and stopped his furious career. The jerk threw Emily backward. She fell into Melville's outstretched arms.

The horse stood trembling. Melville dismounted, and took Emily to a seat near by. She looked at him so kindly, so tenderly, that a flood of happiness rushed through his soul.

"O thank you, my brave preserver!"

"I am recompensed beyond all that I can hope, in seeing you safe."

"Where is my father?"

"He is coming. There he is! He will be here in a few moments."

"You did a terrible thing," she said, as she thought shudderingly of the gully.

"Did you see me?"

"It was an awful thing to see. I shuddered."

"O then, happy am I if I can gain the smallest share of sympathy—the smallest thought from you."

"You risked your life, too,"—she did not finish, but looked at him, and their eyes met. Hers fell down.

"Emily!"

She did not reply, but lowered her head. Through the thick ringlets of hair which clustered around her head, Melville could see a gentle blush which overspread her lovely features.

"Emily—speak, Emily—can you think well of me?"

She raised her eyes and again they met his. What the impassioned youth might have said, we cannot tell, but he was prevented from speaking by Mr. Inglis, who at this moment came up. He leaped from his horse.

"Emily, my child, are you saved?" he cried, rushing towards her, and folding her in his arms.

"Yes, I am alive, dear father, and there is my preserver."

"Noble, brave youth. May the richest blessings of Heaven descend on you. You have saved my child from death. I saw your own at that terrible chasm. O that I could fittingly reward you!"

There was one reward which he could give.

CHAPTER III.

FORTUNE FAVORS THE BRAVE!

Mr. Inglis again sat in his parlor, and Emily was near. There was a thoughtful expression upon his face. Occasionally she glanced at her father, to see what he was doing, or perchance

to endeavor to discover what thoughts were in his mind.

"Emily," said he, at length.

"Father."

"I know not how to reward Henry. What can I do? I am in want of a head clerk. I wonder if you understand business. I will ask him."

"What kind, sir?"

"Good morning," said Mr. Inglis, grasping his hand. "I can have you as a servant no longer. Permit me to esteem you as a friend, for surely you are my equal, and you have laid me under unpayable obligations to you. Do you know anything of business?"

"Any kind—shipping business."

"Yes, sir, thoroughly. I have been in situations where I learned it."

"Take off this servile dress. Live in my house as my friend, and if you wish, I will take you as my head clerk."

"Your clerk, Mr. Inglis! How—how can I thank you so very much?"

"Think not of thanks. That is my business. Come with me and I will show you what is to be done."

And the two departed. Melville first went to purchase more appropriate clothing, and then went to Mr. Inglis's office.

A year passed away. Melville had been prosperous beyond all his hopes. Immense profits could then be obtained from chartering ships and from exporting wool. Materials of food and clothing for the gold regions at Melbourne, could also be sold at enormous profits. Mr. Inglis had kindly advanced him money to commence independent speculations. This he had so well used, that at the end of the year the original amount had increased ten-fold.

"Ten thousand pounds! In one year too! And at the same time punctually fulfilling every duty as clerk. Mr. Melville, you are the paragon of clerks. With your genius and energy you will soon be among the wealthiest in the country. You have now a fortune of your own. I have long wanted a partner in my business, for I am growing old. You can enter without feeling any great inferiority. Will you do so?"

"You are overwhelming me with kindness," said Melville, in a faltering voice. "How can I ever repay you? To be in partnership with you, is such a grateful thing to me that I can never thank you enough."

"O there is no need of thanks. I am happy to do this. One like you, I may say without flattery, is very rarely to be found. But how very strange is the fact which threw you in my way! What wonderful circumstances! A servant in my family! A gentleman like you to be a servant! What led you to it? Surely you could have gained a living in a less unpleasant way."

"It has turned out of my blessing," said Melville. In the evening, Melville, the new-made partner sat alone with Emily in the parlor. It was dark, and the heavy curtains which hung before the window increased the gloom. The moon's rays entered and fell softly upon the floor.

"What a strange life yours has been," said Emily.

"Yes. Do you remember when you saw me first?"

"Well—I always shall remember it—the young confectioner with his box of candy."

"I will bless that box of candy forever."

"

"I entered at Eton, nobody cared for me at home. I went through Oxford, took first honor in the university, then went home, but being only a cipher—alas a younger son, they treated me coldly. My father advised me to join the army. I told him I would see the army shot first. My mind was made to come here. Two hundred guineas constituted all my fortune. All these I spent either before or during the passage out. When I landed here I only had a half crown!"

"Good heavens, only half a crown?"
"All that I had in the world, except my clothes. I sold them and commenced the business of a confectioner. You know the rest."
"Why did you decide to be a servant? Ah, I know now. You look down at that little witch of a girl who is almost crying with joy."
"I'm not, pa. What nonsense!"
"Crying with joy, and she looks knowingly at you. Ah, ha! You have been rehearsing the play of 'She stoops to conquer,' only it was the gentleman in this case. But now all your troubles are over!"

"All over, I am happy."
And his large, dark eyes gleamed with the joy which dwelt within him.
"Will three weeks be too soon, Emmie dearest?" said he, in a mysterious whisper.

"Nonsense, Henry," and there came a smothered "don't," for Mr. Inglis had left them alone for a little time.

A few days afterward Melville was standing upon a wharf watching some passengers who landed from a vessel late from Melbourne. Suddenly he started. "Why, Marden," he cried, springing forward to grasp the hand of a foreign looking individual in a tattered hat and tattered coat. "Where are you bound, young 'un?"

"Home."
"Home? how is that? Have you made your fortune?"

"No, I'm as poor as a rat. Only earned enough to take me back. Hang the gold country! But I declare, you look as if you had made your fortune."

"I have. But tell me, would you go home if you could get a good situation here?"

"No, indeed!"
"Then stay. But first come to a hotel and 'renovate.' If you want money, I can lend."
"Hush! I don't want money. Since I am sure of a situation, I will lay aside the ragamuffin character, and be once more a gentleman."

"And in two weeks hold yourself in readiness to go!"

"To—to what?"
"To attend my—"
"Well?"
"My—well, my wedding."

CUT LOOSE AGAIN, MISTER.

A friend of ours, who is a most accomplished salesman, and who is kept very busy in one of the up-town dry goods houses, was complimented, not long since, in manner and form as follows, to wit:

"He had a countryman in the store, and was showing him a very handsome piece of ladies' dress goods, not with any great hope of selling it; still there was some slight chance, and besides, it is necessary for him to keep constantly in practice. So he dashed ahead in fine style, praised the richness of the pattern, extolled the texture of the fabric, held it up to a favorable light, vouching for its ultra-fashionableness; and, in short, let loose a torrent of eloquence, in which it was difficult to distinguish which was the most flattered, the taste of the admiring rustic, or the quality of the magnificent merchandise."

Bumpkin's eyes flashed with gratified pride at the complimentary allusions to himself, and unconsciously astonished at the development of beauty in the goods and fluency in the salesman. Catching our friend by the arm, he exclaimed, "Stop right here one minute!" and dashed out of the store with two or three rapid bounds. Grogginess stood, a little bewildered, holding the bolt of goods across both hands, as though he had "frozen" in the attitude in which he had so thoroughly imitated the rural gentleman. Meantime this last mentioned individual walked two bouncing girls out of a carriage, which stood in front of the store, and half palling, half pushing them, brought them up in front of him of the staid tongue."

"Gals! I stand there—right there, Sally—and me, Mister, cut loose again! I just snuck the gals to hear you!"

It is almost needless to say, in view of the peculiarity of the circumstances, that our friend was overwhelmed with his emotions, and for once in his life failed in his utterance—to the great disappointment of the father and of both daughters.—*Monogramist's Mail.*

THE OLD SWAMP MISTER.

There is now living in the swamp of the Little Pedee river, South Carolina, an old man of the most singular character. He never owned but one pair of shoes in his life, and he says they were so hot he never wore them but once. He never cultivated the soil; nevertheless, he has accumulated a large sum of money, which he deposits in hollow trees in the most unfrequented swamps. He affects extreme poverty, and when applied to for the loan of money, he declares he has none; but if the security pleases him, and promises to pay in specie, he will appoint a day when he will try to get a little, which he never fails to do. He has made his fortune by the sale of fish, the finest of which he keeps exactly where to fish for, and honey, which he raises in immense quantities, having his beehives in swamps for miles around. No music is so charming to his ear as the booming of ballads, and the howling of the alligators; for these sing his lullaby when he lies in his cradle, and have been the harbingers of his bravest days from his boyhood to the present day. He never uses any other weapon to kill snakes with than his heels, and there was never but one known to attempt to bite him, and that one broke his heel without penetrating his foot. Strange as it may seem, this queer, character, journeying in different places in pursuit of the pleasure of mankind, he had for the most part, like the subterranean troglodyte, over which the foot passes as on common ground, till necessity breaks open the golden cavern.—*Blunder.*

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

LINES

TO THE MEMORY OF MADAME H. SONTAG.

BY J. ALFORD.

Tourists, and mingling with her kindred dust,
Her latest sleep, as worth and beauty must;
Her heavenly voice subdued the varied throng,
And charmed the listening throngs with her song.
But now she sleeps, and so the world is left;
In death's embrace she lies, who sweetly sang;
No more those fingers weave the trembling lyre,
Whose melting strains a church might inspire.
Yet dear the frame to those who knew her worth;
In death's embrace she lies, who sweetly sang;
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Yet dear the frame to those who knew her worth;
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"The new frame of earth that moulders here!
Sontag, immortal, still her native sphere;
Crowned with fair fame, perfume her spirit flies,
Bursting the shell that kept her from the skies.
Yet dear the frame to those who knew her worth;
Whose talents bright could animate the earth;
Whose angel voice could soothe the ear,
Whose cheer the heart, or soft sigh's tear.
Worn by that and which marked her former days,
Cherished in her slum by universal praise,
She journeyed on till checked by that dread rod,
Which brings all Nature unto Nature's God."

[Written for The Flag of our Union.]

HAMILTON IRVING'S SEARCH

FOR A WIFE—AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

BY M. V. ST. LEON.

F. HAMILTON IRVING, Esq., had just returned to his native city of New York, after a three years absence on the continent. Twenty-five years of age, handsome, witty, wealthy, and an accomplished scholar, it is no wonder he found himself an object of great interest to matrons with large families, and interesting young ladies. But Theodore Irving, Esq., father to our hero, had set his heart upon his son's marrying Miss Louise Howard, a reigning belle, and what was much better in the elder gentleman's eyes, a great niece, and notwithstanding the polite and earnest manner in which he stated his hopes and plans to his son, the latter at once refused to comply with anything of the sort.

"What is your objection?" inquired the father; "do you dislike the appearance of Miss Howard?"

"Really, sir, I can't inform you on that point, as I have never seen her."

"Then it is unjust to condemn her, but I assure you she is the belle of the season."
"There, that is enough to condemn her. I would rather marry a housemaid, than a reigning beauty, and have no heartless flirts, have been engaged to a dozen different persons, etc., besides, I am not so tired of my individuality yet, as to sink into the husband of the lady who was the reigning belle last season! I think the distinction and notice should be on the gentleman's account."

"Pooh! Altogether too nonsensical—the son of a millionaire will excite remark enough to preserve him from being a nobody, and if you must be equal in all things, aint you the reigning beau of the season?" said the old gentleman, with a laugh. "Come, wait till you see her before I am so sure of it. She is a beauty, a beauty and an heiress, though she was a Venus in beauty, and an angel in disposition; one is enough, but both together, is more than I can stand."

"By a tippler!" exclaimed the elder gentleman, who was standing by the window, "talk of a person and they'll come. Here's Miss Howard this moment, coming to call upon your mother. Stop, stop, Hamilton!" continued the father, as his hopeful son seized his hat and was beating a retreat for the back stairs, to avoid the old door—"stop!" Hamilton by this time had gained the landing and was about to plunge down the stairs, "remember, a beauty, an heiress—ah, ha, ha, a belle!" shouted the old gentleman amid the clattering of young Irving's boot heels, and sounds of a hurried retreat, and the slamming of doors.

During the somewhat lengthy walk our hero took, his resolution strengthened, and he finally determined to set out on a search for a wife; just such a one as he had so often pictured in his mind; pretty, amiable, and bewitching. Ah, yes, he would go a good way off, and find this piece of perfection, and better than all the rest, she should know nothing of his wealth and position till he married her. Then he would bring her to his home and introduce her to his friends—how surprised she would be—and in less than an hour from the time Hamilton Irving quitted his father's house in Fifth Avenue, this most glorious scheme was conceived, arranged, in progress, and in short, everything but realized.

The next morning at the breakfast table, Hamilton announced his intention of starting off without delay for the country.

"Why, where are you going?" asked his mother, in surprise.

"Don't know anything where," was the response.

"How long shall you be gone?" inquired his sister.

"Can't tell anything about it. Perhaps a week, perhaps three months."

"How do you suppose we shall know where to address you?" said his mother.

"O I shall write of course, when I'm settled, so there's a post-office anywhere within twenty miles."

"Now Hamilton," said his sister.

"What do you mean?" inquired his mother.

Irving senior merely raised his eyebrows with a comical expression, took a sip of coffee, and resumed his paper.

In spite of persuasions to the contrary, this second Celebs packed up, took his passage and departed.

For eight weeks journeying and sojourning in different places in pursuit of the wife more difficult than he had anticipated. To his astonishment, in the face of all sentimental novels, the little country girls were tame, and un-

derstood more about making butter and cheese, than playing on the guitar or speaking Italian, for it must be in mind our hero carefully avoided all towns and places where the "march of improvement" had begun, and he was almost inclined to give up the search after what might be an impossibility, when one day he lighted upon a most romantic little village in the northern part of Vermont. The beauty of the place, rather than any hopes of finding the object he sought, induced Irving to stop there for a few days at least. Throughout his tour he had assumed a name, which, though his own, he was rarely recognized by—it consisted of his first and second name—Frederic Hamilton, and such he wrote it in the book at the little untending hotel.

As he was returning from a fishing expedition one afternoon, he passed by the schoolhouse for the first time, and through the open window he caught sight of a face that caused him to drop the fishing pole and all. It was the village schoolmistress!

"I've found her!" ejaculated Hamilton. "I've found the rare article! But how shall I make her acquaintance? I'll first discover where this jewel lives, and then form my plan—and he hazed into the room again. At length he succeeded in tearing himself away and returning to the hotel. On the way there he met a little urchin, and preferring to ask the boy rather than the landlady concerning the matter, inquired if he could tell him who kept the village school.

"Miss Wentworth," replied the boy's steed, child, digging the sandy path with his toes, and carrying the last letter of the first word over to the second one.

"Where does she live?" continued the questioner.

"To Squire Hildreth's."

"Can you direct me to the house?"

"I guess so. You see the tavern, don't you? Well, you go by that till you come to a little red house, and you see that great big one there on the hill, don't you? Ye keep right straight on till ye come to that fair yellow one, and that's Squire Hildreth's."

Thanking his informant, Hamilton proceeded to the hotel, and after dressing himself with unusual care, inquired of the landlady whether Mr. Hildreth owned a library.

"I believe so," replied the host, "at any rate you needn't be afraid to go and inquire."

Accordingly, taking the fish which had been carefully cleaned, Hamilton set out for the Squire's. As he approached the house, he was pleased with its quaint, rural aspect; it had a large portico at the back entrance which was in the ell, and facing the road, and old trees shaded it from the heat. The young gentleman glanced covertly at all the windows, but the one object was not at any of them, and seeing the owner of the house coming up the path, Hamilton made a dash for it, and was about to retreat, but the kind-hearted old gentleman wrote that he esteemed his son's happiness too much, to make him as miserable as his letter had declared he should be, if he did not marry Miss Wentworth.

On the day appointed for the wedding, Hamilton and his betrothed moved up to the splendid mansion of Irving senior. Everything was in readiness for the ceremony, and off to Trinity Church the whole line of carriages dashed.

Colonel Howard had been chosen to give the bride away, and Alice Irving, with three other young ladies, were the bridesmaids. The affair passed off with great smoothness and elegance.

Irving was delighted with the wedding reception every one gave his really beautiful bride, and he thought his prize entitled to command it.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, the whole party returned to the Irvings to a breakfast, in honor of the occasion. During the course of the next day the young wife invited her husband to call with her and see some friends of hers.

"Friends of yours?" echoed the astonished bridegroom, "I never knew you had any New York!"

"A few," replied the lady, with a smile.

The carriage was ordered, and the curtains drawn, on account of a sudden weakness of the lady's eyes. At last the coach stopped, and Irving looked out; he rubbed his eyes, they seemed to be the weak one now, and, slightly followed by his charming Fanny up the marble steps of one of the Fifth Avenue palaces.

"It is possible my wife is acquainted with nursery maids or governesses?" he thought with an involuntary shudder.

They were shown into the drawing rooms, where sat Colonel Howard, who rose, and clasping the form of Fanny, who had rushed forward exclaiming, "Dear father!" to his arms, imparted kiss after kiss on her cheeks. Irving stood in amazement; he had certainly married Fanny Wentworth, and that lady was in the arms of Colonel Howard, calling him father, while he addressed her as Louise. It was very marvellous, and Hamilton shook himself to wake from this dream, but at this moment the door opened and a footman announced Madame and Miss Irving. At the same instant came another arrival in the shape of Mr. Irving.

"Ha, ha, my dear boy, you are never going to marry an heiress and a belle," and the old gentleman burst into a fresh outbreak. At last Hamilton ascertained the truth of the mystery.

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On the reception of this large fortune, she had determined to take a jaunt into the country, and was so much soothed by the security she was so worried with, and had chosen the very place to which Hamilton had strayed, and soon after her arrival, the daughter of Squire Hildreth who was teaching the school, was taken ill, and our heroine, amused with the novelty of the idea, proposed taking her place till she recovered. Nev-

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And he never did.

"You find this school quite a novel exhibition, do you not?" asked Miss Wentworth.

"I do indeed. I should think you must be greatly amused, sometimes."

"I am, I assure you—this afternoon they behaved much more than usual on account of a stranger's presence; such an event is always the signal for all manner of irregularities."

"Do you like school teaching?"

"Very well indeed—the charm is not yet worn off."

"You have not taught long then?"

"No sir, a very little while."

When the school commenced again, Hamilton, with the admiring eye watched the exquisite figure of the teacher as she bent over a scholar to explain a sum, or walked the floor while hearing a recitation. She was not very tall, and quite slender, with a profusion of golden brown hair in broad plaits about her classical little head. Her eyes were a clear brown, and at once wild and mischievous, and a gleam in her cheek when she smiled, was a host in itself. Altogether, she was enchanting, and of this truth Hamilton was most fully convinced—her manners and dress were exquisite as her person, and save in position and wealth, she far surpassed any lady Irving had ever seen; his mind was fully made up to win the beauty, if possible. The weeks sped away, and at last he had the blessed assurance that his love was returned, and that charming Fanny Wentworth was willing to become Fanny Irving.

The happy lover now disclosed his true position and last name to the lady, who appeared more surprised than he expected, for he had thought his manners and conversation must have discovered him; perhaps he felt a little piqued, and gave his full real credit for discernment than formerly, for believing to the end that he was of a respectable family and, and possessed of a moderate income. But whatever was the cause, she was exceedingly astonished at his explanation. Hamilton immediately wrote to his parents for their approbation, and naming the day, desired his sister to see to all the necessary arrangements, for he wished a marriage à la reine, in the rights for an hour, to be received by his father's consent, somewhat to his surprise; but the kind-hearted old gentleman wrote that he esteemed his son's happiness too much, to make him as miserable as his letter had declared he should be, if he did not marry Miss Wentworth.

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"Do you like school teaching?"

"Very well indeed—the charm is not yet worn off."

"You have not taught long then?"

"No sir, a very little while."

When the school commenced again, Hamilton, with the admiring eye watched the exquisite figure of the teacher as she bent over a scholar to explain a sum, or walked the floor while hearing a recitation. She was not very tall, and quite slender, with a profusion of golden brown hair in broad plaits about her classical little head. Her eyes were a clear brown, and at once wild and mischievous, and a gleam in her cheek when she smiled, was a host in itself. Altogether, she was enchanting, and of this truth Hamilton was most fully convinced—her manners and dress were exquisite as her person, and save in position and wealth, she far surpassed any lady Irving had ever seen; his mind was fully made up to win the beauty, if possible. The weeks sped away, and at last he had the blessed assurance that his love was returned, and that charming Fanny Wentworth was willing to become Fanny Irving.

